TOURVILLE;

OR, THE

MYSTERIOUS LOVER:

A SENTIMENTAL NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO THE

READER.

IT is not without ſome apprehenſion for its fate, that the following tale is preſented to the public. Tales, which mark only the progreſs of the affections, neither terrify, nor ſurprize; and at preſent, the world is almoſt inundated

inundated with novels, which are framed for no other purpoſe, but that of generating terror, and aſtoniſhment, by a contexture of marvellous, and myſterious improbabilities. It is much eaſier to conform to the prevailing taſte, than either to explode it, or to inſpire a better. I fear, therefore, that for the moſt part, the readers of our faſhionable romances, will take up the following pages with indifference, and lay them down again with averſion. For I have not ſpread before them that feaſt of Gothic horrors, of ghoſts, and præternatural agencies, which they

they have devoured for ſo long a time without diſguſt, or ſatiety.

But the ſtory, which is related in theſe pages, will make an effectual appeal to a more refined claſs of underſtandings. To this claſs, as it were, to an audience, from which groſs and vulgar minds are excluded, I would addreſs this narrative. It ſpeaks to the heart, and to it's affections. It ſpeaks of raptures, which few only have felt; of refinements which few can comprehend; and it is derived from a world, in which they have never lived, who cannot diſtinguiſh

guiſh between ſenſual, and intellectual pleaſures, between the paſſions that connect us with the animal creation, and the feelings, to uſe an expreſſion of Plato, that unite us with the Divinity.

TOURVILLE,

&c. &c.

IN the year 1778, the Counteſs of Clairmont was a beautiful widow, at the age of eighteen. She had been educated according to the Pariſian ſyſtem of inſtruction: and expoſed, in common with the greater part of her ſex, to the ſeductions of example, and the errors of precept. The Counteſs reſiſted both. The goodneſs of her heart, counteracted the evils of her

education. There are ſome minds, which receive their good qualities, from nature, rather than from any elaborate deductions of reaſon. The mind of the Counteſs from her earlieſt youth, had been more under the guidance of her affections, than under the control either of her own judgment, or that of others.

The Counteſs was endowed with a ſpecies of beauty, which is to be found very rarely in woman: becauſe it was a ſort of beauty, that required no embelliſhment of art; and which exiſted in the Counteſs, almoſt without the conſciouſneſs of her poſſeſſing it. Perhaps the ſituation of this beautiful

woman

woman was more than uſually, dangerous. In the very centre of diſſipation, and refinement, ſurrounded by all the temptations, which in a ſplendid metropolis, and in the higheſt ranks of that metropolis, it is ſo difficult to reſiſt, ſhe was under no controul, independent, and wealthy.

With the portion of ſenſibility, that nature had given to the Counteſs, it is not likely that ſhe ſhould have been very happy. In her early youth, ſhe had taught her mind to feaſt upon the imaginations, and to cheriſh the reveries, which are always the offspring of youthful ſenſibility. In this delightful ſtate of deluſion, we are in-

clined to take our own emotions, as a ſecurity for the good feelings of others. We are led to imagine, that every breaſt is witneſs to our own ſenſations, and that the ſame generous ſentiments vibrate on every heart. Then an univerſe, decked in the brighteſt colors, lies extended before us: and images of the pureſt virtue, and the moſt unſullied goodneſs people the world, we have been creating. But this romantic creation is ſoon diſſipated: and we are left to idle complaints at having loſt that, which we never had, and to unavailing regret, that we attended rather to the ſuggeſtions of our own hearts, than the experience, and practice of the world.

Such

Such at the age of eighteen, was the painful ſituation of the Counteſs of Clairmont. She had been united by her parents, when ſhe was only thirteen years old, to a nobleman, who came with no other pretenſion to her hand, than his birth, which was equal to that of the Counteſs. From the great diſparity of age, but above all from the great diſparity of their diſpoſitions, any one might have foretold that ſuch an union would not be happy. Yet her parents approved it, and the opinion of the world coincided with the approbation of the parents. An ample fortune, and a ſplendid eſtabliſhment among the polite claſſes of ſociety, are all the conſiderations,

which relate to marriage; and when every thing was ſo ſatisfactory in this reſpect, it would have been folly to have attended to other ſcruples, or to have made any other enquiry.

The Count de Clairmont, when he found himſelf in poſſeſſion of ſo much beauty, was tranſported, and almoſt intoxicated, with what he had obtained. He was in poſſeſſion of a bride, whoſe charms had made every tongue eloquent in their praiſe. She was the diſcourſe of every polite circle in Paris, and it was a ſpecies of regular homage, as if ſhe was a divinity, to ſpeak of her with admiration. The tranſports, however, which the Count felt,

felt, had not that mixture of delicacy infuſed into them, that was requiſite, to make an impreſſion on the heart of his Counteſs. She was framed only to inſpire the tendereſt of all paſſions; and the tender paſſions, when they are addreſſed without delicacy, ſhrink, from the profanation of every touch, that aſſails them. She could not but feel, with all the ſenſibilities of her heart, the horrors of the ſacrifice, ſhe had made. She could not but revolt at the very idea, of ſurrendering a treaſure, which ought only to be won by merit, and beſtowed by affection.

Theſe reflections generated very painful and bitter regrets, in her boſom.

But to theſe regrets ſhe was indebted for her freedom, from the importunities of her huſband. The Counteſs was unacquainted with diſſimulation. She did not, therefore, diſplay in her looks, when the Count was with her, feelings, to which her heart was a ſtranger. The expreſſion of her face was cold, and diſcouraging, when he addreſſed her. The Count, however, was not offended with it. Not accuſtomed to read the human heart, and blinded by the prepoſſeſſion, he felt towards his wife, he attributed this coldneſs to reſerve, rather than indifference; and though at length, he was undeceived, he conſidered that in ſo young a woman, as the Counteſs, the affections,

affections, were ſcarcely worth having, if they could not be obtained, without trouble, and mortification. Other objects faſcinated him; and he did not reſiſt their allurements. If not without ſurpriſe, certainly without regret, the Counteſs found, that Clairmont was become gradually unimportunate, and indifferent. Nay, he carried this indifference, to ſuch an extreme, that he avowed to her, with an air of frankneſs, and candour, that the terms, on which they lived, were more agreeable to his own habits, and inclinations, than thoſe, on which they muſt have lived, had ſhe cheriſhed an unſuitable affection towards him.

The coolneſs, and paſſive diſpoſition of the Counteſs, removed a reſtraint from her huſband, rather than inflicted a wound. It was convenient to a man of intrigue, that he ſhould be neither ſubject to reproach, nor ill-humor. As to the Counteſs, ſhe felt no reſentment whatever. She preſerved the ſame reſpect for her own vow, as if his had been never violated. The Count indeed, did not aſcribe the fidelity of his wife, to the virtues, which produced it. He believed, that ſhe was cold to others, as ſhe had been to him; and the modeſty ſhe diſplayed, the awful looks, which chaſtiſed every violation of it, and which diſcouraged the attentions of all, who ſurrounded her,

her, he imputed to natural inſenſibility. Never did any man entertain a more erroneous opinion. Her heart which was then the moſt endangered by exceſs of feeling, and ſentiment, was guarded only by the pride, and delicacy, which the conſciouſneſs of her danger had called to her aſſiſtance.

Such was the ſtate of her mind, when the Count was carried off by a ſudden illneſs. This event left her entirely independent; and it is eaſy to imagine, that the ſituation in which this young, and beautiful widow found herſelf, was extremely critical. Two years, however, had elapſed; and no-

thing in the courſe of this interval had occurred, that called for more than common fortitude, or that expoſed the ſenſibilities of her heart to danger.

The circumſtances in which ſhe was placed, not the inclinations of her heart, involved her in the buſtle, and diſſipation of the world. As to her affections, the ſort of beings, with whom ſhe mingled in theſe circles, were very little likely to interrupt her tranquillity. It was indeed very unlikely, that a woman, like the Counteſs, ſhould not have flattered herſelf, with the hope of inſpiring a ſacred, and an ardent attachment; that her imagination

imagination ſhould not have painted in the moſt vivid colours, the future happineſs of being loved for herſelf alone; and the tranſports of producing that bright and eternal affection, which conſumes itſelf on one object, which admits of nothing foreign, or adventitious, and burns with a pure and hallowed flame in the breaſt of virtue, and innocence. This is the ſort of love, which exiſts in the rhapſodies of the poets.

Had the Counteſs cheriſhed theſe imaginations, the world in which ſhe moved, would very ſpeedily have brought her to her ſenſes. But ſhe had too much penetration, to encourage the

the deluſion. As ſhe mingled in ſociety, the hollowneſs of it's pretenſions, the inſincerity of it's praiſe, the ambiguity of it's homage, it's falſe and diſſembled enthuſiaſm, and it's uniform purſuit after it's own advantage, preſented to her mind the genuine, but the melancholy portrait of life, and it's concerns. Often did this amiable woman ſigh, at the diſcovery, ſhe had made; and often did ſhe retire to the gloomy intercourſe with her own imagination, and ſeek a ſort of perturbed ſatisfaction in the creation of a new, and congenial world. It was a ſatisfaction, that rendered her ſorrows ſtill more acute; and the dream of bliſs, from which ſhe had been awakened,

kened, left her ſtill more diſguſted with the follies, the treacheries, and the manners of the world, from which her fancy had for ſo ſhort a period been emancipated.

In ſuch a ſtate of mind, the Counteſs could not forbear even in the very midſt of ſociety, conſidering herſelf as a ſolitary being. To that world of ſentiment, and of affections, which her imagination had erected, ſhe ſeemed only to belong: and the importunities of a circle of admirers, that her rank, and her accompliſhments had drawn around her, rendered her deluſions ſtill more ſoothing, and enchanting. To theſe ſhe diſplayed an indifference,

indifference, which ſhe never ſoftened, or relaxed. But ſhe was notwithſtanding this, an object of envy: and ſhe had already created many rivals, where ſhe had not thought of a ſingle lover.

Who could expect that beauty, armed with pride, and adorned with ſo many attractions, ſhould eſcape the attacks of that devouring calumny, which ſeeks it's prey in every ſtation of life, but which is always the moſt ravenous, among the higher, and what by a proſtitution of words, is called the refined portion of ſociety? Againſt theſe attacks, neither her good-nature, her affability, nor her beauty pleaded

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At length, this perſecution abated. Calumny was at laſt convinced, that the beauty which it maligned, was beyond the reach of it's attack. The general opinion was in her favor: and her enemies contented themſelves, with ſarcaſms on the perverſe ſingularity of her manners, and the elevated romance of her imagination.

One evening, at one of the faſhionable places of reſort, the converſation, as uſual, turned upon the character of the young Counteſs. The diſcourſe attracted the attention of the polite, and handſome Marquis de Tourville. At that very moment, Mademoiſelle D'Aubrè, who took the liberty of abuſing

abuſing the Counteſs, upon the privilege of being her moſt intimate friend, was diſplaying as much eloquent ſatire, and poliſhed ill-nature, as her imagination could afford her. The young Marquis had liſtened patiently for ſome time to the abuſe, which was poured out againſt the unknown Counteſs. At laſt, however, he took up her cauſe with ſpirit, and energy. The warmth, with which he ſpoke, might indeed have been interpreted in a manner very injurious to the reputation of the individual, whom he defended; but he was a perfect ſtranger to her. He had reſided for the laſt ſeven years at foreign courts. The marriage of the Counteſs did not take place, till

ſoon

ſoon after his departure from France; and he had only returned to Paris within a very few hours.

Tourville had ſet out upon his travels, when he was very young. He had contracted habits of enlarged, and liberal thinking. There was nothing national about him, except an ardent attachment to his ſovereign, and the gallantry and poliſh of a Frenchman. He had penetration enough to diſcover that the motives of all this defamation, were meanneſs, and jealouſy. His feelings were rouſed at the unworthy treatment, the woman, whom he never ſaw, had ſuſtained in her abſence. It was ſaid, that on this occaſion the Marquis

ſurpaſſed

ſurpaſſed his natural eloquence. But if the Counteſs had been before attacked by cavil, and inſinuations, ſhe was now perfectly deteſtable; and her kind friends, who out of the warmth of affection, had innocently turned her into ridicule, looked upon her now as an object of hatred, and abhorrence.

The Marquis de Tourville obſerved that it was a misfortune even to be born in an age, in which delicacy of ſentiment was regarded as the extravagance of a chimerical imagination. "If I could eſtimate the qualities of "the Counteſs," ſaid he, "by what "has been ſaid againſt her, I ſhould "be inclined to ſuppoſe her one of "thoſe

" thoſe beings of rare, and enchanting
" virtues, which our fancy is ſo wont
" to pourtray, and on which the ſan-
" guine hopes of youth and inexperi-
" ence are ſometimes ſo credulouſly
" fixed."

At this very moment the Counteſs herſelf was announced: and, what was the aſtoniſhment of Tourville, when he obſerved a beautiful figure entering the room, with an air of modeſty, but without embarraſſment, and adorned with all the charms of an intereſting ſimplicity. Her head was graced with no other ornament, than that of a wreath of roſes, artleſsly interwoven in her hair, which was of an auburn

auburn colour. The flowers, ſhe had diſpoſed over her hair, formed a ſort of contraſt to the ivory whiteneſs of her neck, over which her ringlets played with a graceful negligence. Her eyes, though of a fine velvet black, beamed with languiſhment and love. Every feature of her face was well proportioned, and a bright ſenſibility was lighted up in her countenance. With all theſe charms, ſhe united the faſcinations of an artleſs and lovely ſmile, and a clear and mellifluous voice.

The Marquis ſtarted with a ſort of myſterious movement, as ſhe entered the room. All the good people, who had been liſtening with the moſt ſple-

netic

netic impatience to his eulogium upon the Counteſs, when they remarked the effect, which was produced by her appearance, but moſt viſibly on the accompliſhed Marquis de Tourville, could ſcarcely ſtifle their emotions. I do not know, whether all the men felt a genuine emotion, at the ſight of this lovely creature. Probably having no peculiar characters of their own, they might think it proper to feign an impulſe, which nature had denied them; and from the attitude, and manner of Tourville, catch a ſpecies of imitative enthuſiaſm.

But what did the Marquis feel at this awful moment? Dumb with admiration,

miration, fearful of loſing a ſingle ſound of her voice, his eyes fixed in a ſtate of ſilent emotion on the Counteſs, he ſeemed transformed into a ſtatue. His perturbation was too viſible to eſcape the obſervation of the Counteſs: and ſhe betrayed the conſciouſneſs of it, by the conſtrained, and down-caſt expreſſion of her eyes, which though at firſt, they were involuntarily fixed on the Marquis, now rolled with reſtleſs inquietude on every object, that ſurrounded her.

That there ſhould have been a ſort of damp thrown upon the brilliancy of ſatire, and the vivacity of ill-nature, as ſoon as the Counteſs appeared, is

by no means a matter of ſurpriſe. In truth, the attack, which that beautiful woman had undergone, did more effectual homage to her charms, than the defence the Count had made in her behalf. Her character was very oppoſite to that of the female company in the room. She was an enemy to polite detraction. The unembelliſhed ſimplicity of her expreſſion, and diction, infinitely ſurpaſſed the mock luſtre of faſhionable converſation. In this party was the Duke de Nouville. He profeſſed himſelf an admirer of the Counteſs; and was in fact as much in love with her, as any character of that kind could be enamoured of any object but himſelf. With a tone of affected earneſtneſs,

neſtneſs, " Madam," ſaid he, addreſ-ſing the Counteſs, " I know of none, " that has ſo happy a power of con-" founding ſcandal and ſatire, as " yourſelf. As to the Marquis de " Tourville, though he is perfectly " unknown to you, I think he has " ſhewn a fine taſte, to be ſuch a " warm advocate in your favor." As ſoon as he had finiſhed this ſentence, he flew to the Marquis, and taking him by the hand preſented him to the Counteſs. Without regarding their mutual confuſion, and perplexity, he proceeded to inform her, with what energy, the Marquis had eſpouſed her cauſe, and warded off the attacks of the amiable friends, that reviled her.

" Upon my honor, Duke," vociferated the fat Baroneſs of Volmeul, with an infantine liſp, (which ſeemed to maintain a ſort of conflict with the rough tones which nature had given her) " Upon my word, you are guilty of " a moſt unpardonable indiſcretion. " Are you not alarmed at the ſitu- " ation of the Marquis? Do you " not ſee, that he is quite frantic? " He can never poſſibly be gratified " with the honor, of being the Che- " valier of the Counteſs. She diſ- " dains all modern knights, and he " muſt be an Amadis at leaſt, on " whom ſhe will look with regard." " —And what," cried the Duke, interrupting

rupting her, "what might not a man "become, to pleaſe ſuch an angel, as "the Counteſs? Even I"—"Stop, "Duke," interpoſed the Counteſs, with an air of affected indifference: "The "Baroneſs has taken the trouble of "anſwering for me to-day, and if "you ſay another word, I ſhall leave "you to ſettle the affair with her in "my name." "Ah Madam," ſaid the Marquis de Tourville, "and do "you ſuppoſe it poſſible, when you "are preſent, that we can attend to "any other perſon?"

Theſe words, uttered in a tone of voice, of which the Counteſs ſpeedily knew the meaning, renewed her em-

barraſſment. But the Baroneſs was ſo completely put out of humor, when ſhe heard them, that ſhe made a vow in her own heart, to revenge the affront that was offered to her, by the admiration that was paid to another perſon. The only mode of gratifying her revenge, that preſented itſelf, was that of making a conqueſt of the Marquis. She had already made ſome advances of this nature; but the only weapon of attack ſhe could uſe, was a forwardneſs of manner, which ſhe ſometimes aſſumed. With the greater part of men, it is a weapon, which is frequently ſucceſsful: becauſe men are either weak, or vain; and by flattering their vanity, or their

weakneſs,

weakneſs, a forward woman has always a very good chance of ſucceſs.

The Marquis, however, did not belong to this claſs of men. No woman appeared lovely, or intereſting in his eyes, who had not the charms of modeſty, and good ſenſe; and at a time, when Madame de Clairmont was the ſovereign of his heart, the advances of ſuch a woman as the Baroneſs de Volmeul, inſpired him with unmingled contempt at the artifice.

Though the Marquis was compelled to ſit by the ſide of the Baroneſs, during ſupper, his eyes were rivetted on

the Counteſs. He ſucceeded, however, in concealing his emotions, animated, probably, with her preſence, and perhaps tranſported to peruſe, in the concern, that ſat on her countenance, ſomething auſpicious to his own deſtiny. The Counteſs did not indeed join in the univerſal praiſe, which was beſtowed upon Tourville. She felt an inexpreſſible delight, when ſhe heard it; and when ſhe treaſured it up in her remembrance, ſhe was ſoothed with the teſtimonies, which her own obſervation, and her own heart brought, to confirm them. She bluſhed when ſhe obſerved that the hour of ſupper flew ſo ſwiftly away; and ſhe bluſhed alſo, when ſhe knew,

what

what it was, that made the time appear ſo ſhort, in the company of the Marquis.

This confuſion had not been unobſerved by the ſharp-ſighted vigilance of the Baroneſs. She was determined to try, whether her ſuſpicions were well-founded. For this purpoſe ſhe requeſted the Counteſs to take her home in her carriage. But ſhe could only draw from her, vague, and general remarks, which meaned nothing; and they were obliged, therefore, to ſeparate for the evening, mutually diſſatisfied with each other.

When the Counteſs was alone, and

left to her own reflections, she began to interrogate herself as to the real state of her affections. But the Marquis was the only object, that presented itself to her mind. Nothing besides Tourville had made the faintest impression on her memory: and her thoughts perpetually glided towards the remembrance of that young man, though she vainly attempted to check, or intercept their current. She confessed to herself, that he was the most dangerous man she had seen. But was he not the most amiable, and the most accomplished? And when she recollected, that without knowing her, he had defended her with such zeal, and enthusiasm, could she without the grossest

groſſeſt ingratitude, baniſh his image from her boſom? Beſides, were ſhe to put this conſtraint upon her reflections, would not the prohibition be uſeleſs, and ineffectual?

Such were the reaſonings, which ſuggeſted themſelves to the Counteſs. She did not reſiſt that ſophiſtry; and there was a feeling in her breaſt, which forbade even the attempt of counteracting theſe reaſonings, leſt ſo ſweet a perſuaſion might be vanquiſhed. Then ſhe gave herſelf up to the dreams of her imagination; and her remembrance feaſted upon the looks, the words, the geſture of the Marquis. In one word,

the Counteſs felt that ſhe loved Tourville.

But I know not how to paint the emotions of Tourville. His dreams were reſtleſs, and crowded with confuſed, and indiſtinct images of the woman, he adored. His imagination called up at once the enchanting hopes, and the throbbing anxieties of the emotions, that tormented him: and all the delightful anticipations, or melancholy forebodings, which poetry has attributed to love, in their paintings of that paſſion, ſucceeded each other in the breaſt of Tourville.

Not long after day-break, the Marquis

quis de Tourville was at the hotel of the Duke de Nouville. The Duke had not yet riſen, and Tourville was conſiderably embarraſſed to aſſign a reaſon for ſo importunate a viſit. The Duke, and the Marquis de Tourville were relations. They had been educated together, and they were not ſeparated, till the Marquis made the tour of the continent. The warmeſt friendſhip exiſted between them. But their characters were ſtrongly contraſted. The Duke, though bleſſed with a good heart, was light, volatile, and the votary of faſhion. As he had not been unobſervant of the Marquis's paſſion, as ſoon as he ſaw him, he indulged himſelf in many good humoured

humoured pleaſantries on the early hour, at which his friend had riſen, and his awkward endeavours, to conceal his emotions from him. "At laſt," with a ſmile of good temper, "Marquis," ſaid he, "I believe I "can tell the *real* motive of your vi- "ſit. Is it not the beautiful Coun- "teſs de Clairmont? But what is be- "come of your boaſted ſtoiciſm? You "know, Marquis, I never gave you "credit for being ſuch a ſage, as the "world thinks you; and now I ſee "too plainly, that the ſight of a fine "countenance, and the languiſhment "of a black eye, has transformed the "philoſopher at once into a man. "Heavens! what a metamorphoſis!

"And

" And this is the cauſe of the viſit;
" with which I am honoured. Nay,
" for my own part, I muſt confeſs,
" I am not a little chagrined to find a
" rival in the Marquis de Tourville.
" But the miſchief is done, and I will
" reſign her. And perhaps after all,
" to abandon what one has no chance
" of obtaining, is as much a prudent
" calculation, as a meritorious ſacri-
" fice. And now, Marquis, I ſhall
" be tormented even to diſeaſe, by your
" confidence; for of all offices, that
" of being the confident of a lover is
" the moſt tormenting. But I will
" not be generous by halves. She is
" your's; and you may unburden your
" mind into my breaſt." The Duke

had

had ſcarcely finiſhed, when Tourville tenderly embraced him, and with his eyes overflowing with gratitude, acknowledged his goodneſs. From this moment, all reſerve on the part of the Marquis would have been highly ungenerous: and he did not forbear, therefore, to unboſom his whole ſoul to his friend. A thouſand enquiries did he make about the number and pretenſions of the admirers of the Counteſs: and he diſcovered a ſtrong anxiety to know, whether any of his rivals had any probability of ſucceeding.

It was ſoon, however, agreed upon, that the Duke ſhould ſend a meſſage to

to the Counteſs de Clairmont, requeſting permiſſion, if ſhe ſpent the evening at home, that he might have the honor of waiting upon her, and of preſenting to her the Marquis de Tourville, his friend, and relation.

The Counteſs had juſt performed the ceremonies of the toilette, when the Duke's valet de chambre was announced to her. The name of the Marquis de Tourville included in the meſſage, conjured up an inſtantaneous crimſon into her countenance. At firſt ſhe heſitated to return an anſwer. She had formed an imperfect engagement for the evening, and ſhe had never yet broken any appointment on account

account of the Duke. But the name of Tourville pleaded with irreſiſtible energy for the requeſt. The conflict was ſhort, and ſhe ſent word to the Duke, that ſhe ſhould be happy to receive him. The valet had ſcarcely left the houſe of the Counteſs, before the Duke himſelf was ſhewn into her apartment. Never did Madame Clairmont look more beautiful. A briſk and lively current of tender hope ſeemed to diffuſe itſelf over her face; and her eyes ſhone with all the impaſſioned ſenſibility, which is the offspring of youthful love.

The Duke affected an air of gaiety: and the Counteſs returned his ſallies, with

with an unuſual vivacity. Not a word eſcaped either of them, concerning the Marquis; becauſe each expected, that the other would ſpeak of him. She began indeed, to perplex herſelf by attempting to account for the Duke's ſilence on a topic, that ſo much intereſted her; and attributed it to an extraordinary coldneſs on the part of the Duke to his young relation. But the Duke obſerved what was paſſing in her mind. "Alas, Madam," ſaid he, "is it the "lot of Tourville, to ſuffer the diſ- "pleaſure of the Counteſs de Clair- mont? The wretched Marquis"—"Ah, "what of the Marquis?" exclaimed the Counteſs, with a look of alarm. "What, Madam," replied the Duke, "are

" are you not the only perſon almoſt " in Paris, who has not offered me con- " gratulations on the accompliſhment " of the Marquis, my relation? Yet " let me aſſure you, though he merits " it more, he does not prize the eſ- " teem of Madame de Clairmont, leſs " than I do." " You both deſerve it," ſaid the Counteſs, with an air of per- turbation. The Duke did not appear to remark her confuſion. It would have been imprudent, had he obſerved it. It was neceſſary to manage her de- licacy with the niceſt caution, to ob- tain permiſſion for the introduction of the Marquis. A ſingle word might have alarmed her on the ſubject, and the

the hopes of Tourville have been extinguiſhed for ever.

The Duke, however, had too much dexterity in theſe matters, to fruſtrate his own purpoſes: and he retired with the pleaſure of having attained the object of his embaſſy. The Marquis, when he ſaw his friend, heard with rapture, the tidings he brought: and as the Duke ſucceſſively repeated her remarks, Tourville had nearly ſtifled him with embraces. "Ah," ſaid the Duke, "this is the travelled lover. Where, "my good friend, did you find theſe "extacies? For my own part, I ſhould "never be elevated to the tranſports, "nor feel the alarms of the love,

"which

" which ſeems to have inſpired my re-
" lation." " Do not deny me," replied the Marquis, " the ſhort and periſhable " moments of bliſs, which I have juſt " enjoyed. My fears preponderate in-" finitely above my hopes, and my " love is too paſſionate, not to feel the " depreſſions of fear, and the throb-" bings of ſolicitude."

They went to the houſe of the Counteſs, the next evening. She did not wear an aſpect of ſo much vivacity, as when they laſt ſaw her. A moſt beautiful languor was ſpread over her countenance. When the eyes of Tourville glanced upon the object of his adoration, he ſtood in need of more than

than mortal firmneſs, to conceal his emotions. He was almoſt deprived of articulation. Nor was the Counteſs leſs agitated.

Their embarraſſment, however, was conſiderably relieved by the numerous circle of company, that were preſent: and fortunately for each of the lovers, the Baroneſs de Volmeul was not in the room. I ſhall not attempt to enumerate the agitations, the diſcordant emotions, and the hoſt of thoſe enchanting ſenſibilities, which are ſo inſenſibly communicated, and participated, by two ſouls, inſpired with a congenial flame. To the greater part of the world, the language of love is totally

totally unintelligible; and the ſilent but energetic eloquence, which ſpeaks in a look, in a ſigh, or even in an attitude, with thoſe, who are ſtrangers to the paſſion, requires a cloſer interpretation, than I can poſſibly beſtow upon it. While Tourville continued in the party, his preſence lent a luſtre to every object that attracted the eyes of the Counteſs. But when he left the company, every intereſting idea ſeemed to fly with him, and to diſſolve as it were, by enchantment. Madame de Clairmont felt herſelf in a ſtate of ſolitude, and eſtranged from all, who ſurrounded her; and it was not without great difficulty, that ſhe was able to

veil

veil her regrets from the general obſervation of the party.

A tribe of reſtleſs, and importunate reflexions crowded together upon her mind. She was aſtoniſhed, that ſhe ſhould have received the Marquis, and by a very deluſive ſophiſtry, ſhe had almoſt perſuaded herſelf, that ſhe could even frame and adhere to a reſolution of avoiding Tourville for the future. It often happens, in the infancy of a vehement paſſion, that reaſon, and prudence make a ſort of exhauſted and expiring ſtruggle in the boſom; and that the heart, before it is completely ſubdued, imagines itſelf to be invincible.

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Though the Duke had never known any thing about a love, of ſo elevated and romantic a kind, as Tourville's, he could not forbear condoling with him upon the paſſion that inſpired him. As to the Marquis, he was tranſported into heaven, whenever he beheld the Counteſs; but he approached her with the awful and ſacred terror, with which the trembling ſoul is ſaid to approach it's Creator. He could not, however, reſiſt the deſire he felt, of being with her; and whenever he met her, whether at public places, or in private parties, he was convinced, that their paſſion was reciprocal.

One night, during the performance of

of the Zara of Voltaire, Tourville went into the box of the Counteſs, and in the moſt reſpectful manner expreſſed his regret, that he never was fortunate enough to find the Counteſs at home. Her beautiful eyes, moiſtened with the tears which the diſtreſſes of the ſcene had excited, were at this moment, clouded with a languor, that heightened their lovelineſs; and though ſhe anſwered him with a guarded politeneſs, there was ſuch a tone of tenderneſs in the voice with which ſhe ſpoke, that Tourville could not miſtake it's meaning. This interview was unavoidably prolonged, by an accident, that happened to the carriage of the Counteſs. In the embarraſſment, which

the accident occaſioned, the Marquis preſſed the Counteſs with much politeneſs to make uſe of his own carriage; at the ſame time, requeſting one of his friends to take the charge of her. She appeared at firſt reluctant to accept the offer; but as he himſelf had renounced the duty of attending her, this delicate attention entirely overcame her ſcruples.

What in the common intercourſes of ſociety, are conſidered as ſlight favors, and impoſe but ſlender obligations, are, by lovers, eſtimated as the moſt precious benefits. Tourville, for the firſt time, was elated with unmingled delight; and the Counteſs congratulated

tulated herſelf on the apparent rapture, which on her accepting his propoſal, brightened his eyes. Nay, ſhe laughed at the timid, and irreſolute ſtate of mind, which ſhe had recently felt; and attributed the fooliſh apprehenſions, ſhe had experienced, to a falſe and exaggerated anticipation of danger. To cheriſh his image in her memory, to brood over the train of ſentiments, which that image produced in her imagination, to love his ſociety, to feel ſolitary and deſolate in his abſence, to love him, as no other woman ever loved, all this, was what was due to his merits. If the attachment was reciprocal, he had never avowed his ſentiments. Why then ſhould ſhe become the victim of

ſuch a childiſh alarm? 'Tis true, ſhe had made a ſolemn vow, before heaven, and her own conſcience, never to contract a ſecond engagement. But was the breach of that vow of widowhood neceſſarily broken, by cheriſhing the chaſtized, and unſenſualized ſentiment of a diſintereſted friendſhip for Tourville?

Theſe reaſonings quieted the ſcruples of the Counteſs. The name of friend, which tranquillizes the alarms, and diſarms the caution of the moſt vigilant of the ſex, diſguiſed to the Counteſs herſelf, the real ſentiments of her boſom. What were her ſenſations, when ſhe found herſelf ſeated in the

the carriage of Tourville! The equipage, the domeſtics, the arms, the liveries, were his; and ſhe was ſurrounded on all ſides by objects, which led to the idea, that reigned in her mind, by a chain of agreeable aſſociations.

But what was her ſurpriſe, when as ſoon as the carriage ſtopt at her door, ſhe beheld the Marquis attended by her uncle General Deſparre, waiting till the carriage arrived. The General was a veteran officer in the ſervice of his Monarch, and an affectionate friend and relation to the Counteſs. The General and the Marquis had met accidentally. The latter had haſtened

before the carriage, in order that he might have the honor of offering his hand to the Counteſs when ſhe alighted; and the General had arrived there the ſame inſtant, to ſup with his niece. The Counteſs had expected her uncle; but, being now more averſe to mixed ſociety than ever, ſhe had not engaged a party to meet him.

The General, who had frequently met the Marquis, and had diſtinguiſhed him among the crowd of faſhionable young men of Paris, by the peculiar elegance of his mind, and manners, when the Marquis was taking leave of her for the evening, preſſed him, with

with conſiderable earneſtneſs, to ſup with the Counteſs.

The Marquis accepted the invitation with rapture. "I knew," ſaid the General, "that the propoſal would "delight him, not becauſe he merely "admires your beauty, but becauſe his "mind is congenial to your's. I have "obſerved this young man, Counteſs, "in the circles of the modern beaux, "that buz and fly about like inſects, "in every place of faſhionable reſort. "I am inclined to pity, and deſpiſe "the greater part of the young men, "whom I meet, when I contraſt them "with the Marquis. He does not ſanc- "tion their abſurdities by his example,

"and he has no ambition of imitating "their vices. Indeed," continued the General, "you are both an excep- "tion to the prevailing character of "the age. Then," turning to the Marquis, "I introduce you," ſaid he, "to a very ſingular woman, if her "merits be tried at the ſtandard of "faſhionable morals. She has not "been verſed in the art of poliſhed "defamation; nor do her own virtues, "like that of the greater number of "modern women, ſhine forth only by "derogatory compariſon with thoſe of "others."

The Counteſs expreſſed her grati- tude to her uncle for the eulogium, which

which in the ſincerity of his heart, he had beſtowed upon her merits. But the raptures of Tourville were not to be deſcribed, when he heard from the General ſuch a panegyric uttered with more than youthful ardor and animation. The time was occupied during the reſt of the evening, with intereſting converſations on different topics. At laſt the hour of parting approached, which would not have been regarded by the two lovers, had not the apprehenſion of it's arrival prepared them for the ſeparation. Regret at parting implies an impatience to meet again. The ſame party was, therefore, frequently renewed.

The General hardly ever paid a viſit to the Counteſs, unaccompanied by the Marquis Tourville. The mutual, and only bliſs, which their minds were now capable of enjoying, was the excluſion of every ſentiment from their boſoms, but the ſentiment they cheriſhed towards each other. They had now retired from the haunts of mixed ſociety, and the buſtle of active life, to a region of pure imagination, and intellectual enjoyment, in which their days glided away with a tranquillity like that of ſaints in heaven. There exiſted between them, confidence, mutual affection, and an union of ſoul, cemented by ligaments of a fine, and aerial texture, if I may reſort to the

rhapſodies

rhapſodies of Plato for words, to deſcribe the paſſion of lovers.

If there was any ſubject, on which Madame Clairmont, and Tourville obſerved a ſort of reſerved ſilence, it was concerning the nature of the paſſion, they had imbibed. But the ſilence of love is eloquent. There are myſterious communications, by which the hidden language, the myſtic characters, and the ſecret utterances of the paſſion, are conveyed from heart to heart. Nature has given us the interpretation; and had the frame of man been deprived of ſpeech, the ſentiments of love would be reciprocally felt and communicated by a ſpecies of expreſſion,

preſſion, infinitely more energetic, and vigorous.

Tourville, as I have before obſerved, was materially of a different diſpoſition from the Duke, his relation. It is natural to ſuppoſe, that in thoſe oppoſite tempers, love ſhould be oppoſite in character and complexion. The Duke could ſcarcely believe that Tourville was in his ſenſes, when the latter told him that he had made an inviolable vow, never to break this reſerve on the ſubject of their paſſion, whilſt the effort was neceſſary to the repoſe of the woman he adored. The Counteſs alſo, though ſhe would have been wounded with the moſt intolerable anguiſh, had ſhe been

been in a ſtate of uncertainty concerning the affections of the Marquis, evaded the avowal, from the apprehenſion of being compelled to make a confeſſion of a paſſion equally ardent, to Tourville.

The General was perpetually with the lovers. But whenever he withdrew, and left them alone, the Counteſs could not avoid obſerving in the countenance of Tourville, the violence by which he repreſſed his own feelings, when he abſtained from making the avowal, and throwing himſelf at her feet. When ſhe obſerved this, there was ſomething ſtern and repulſive in her eyes, or a look rather, which expreſſed

preſſed apprehenſion, and diſmay. She was on theſe occaſions almoſt involuntarily ſilent: whilſt her admirer, intoxicated with delight, when he felt himſelf alone with the Counteſs, was only able to temper his tranſports, by the fear of increaſing the ſufferings, which ſtruggled within her boſom. Such feelings are unintelligible to vulgar minds. With them, love is a groſs and ſenſual paſſion; and neither refined, nor chaſtized by the ſentiments of the heart, or the intellect. But the Marquis, in obeying a reſtraint which delicacy and honor impoſed upon him, enjoyed a rapture far exceeding in value, the ſhort-lived tranſports, which ordinary lovers look upon the female

part

part of the creation, as alone capable of communicating.

As it might be expected, the intimate terms, on which our lovers lived, ſoon attracted the attention of the world, and afforded materials for its converſation. The Duke de Nouville, aſſerted that ſhe was an angel. But he was an unſucceſsful advocate. The men indeed, would have readily ſubſcribed to her praiſe; but the corps of female cenſors ridiculed the very idea of her chaſtity. Every good-natured moraliſt made her own remark, and related her own narrative. Never were envy, and intolerance diſguiſed under ſo fair a maſk of friendſhip and benevolence.

volence. Each told the tale with the moſt exuberant aggravations; and that the reports might not want circulation, they were imparted with the ſtricteſt injunctions of ſecrecy. In ſhort, even a hint was as much attended to upon this ſubject, as the moſt indiſputable teſtimony; and the wildeſt conjectures were the moſt authenticated. Little, however, did the vague, and idle murmurs of theſe inſects affect the Counteſs, or Tourville. Their pride deſpiſed, and their generoſity pitied them: they were elevated very high above the attacks of folly and injuſtice, and they could look down with mercy like the ſouls of the bleſt, on inquietudes, and

and agitations, from which they had been permitted to retire.

The General was not endued with a ſufficient ſhare of philoſophy, to endure the torrent of ſcandal, that overwhelmed the character of the Counteſs. He was, therefore, anxious that Tourville ſhould make an explicit declaration, and confound the machinations of her faſhionable enemies. His anxiety on this ſubject, was ſo great, that it was even viſible to Tourville, as well as his niece. How could Tourville reſiſt the opportunity of avowing his paſſion? He forgot his fear, and irreſolution, and agitated by the impulſe of his love, which was now more ardent

dent from the unnatural conſtraint, it had endured, threw himſelf into the arms of the General, and then at the feet of the Counteſs. Then with all the fervid eloquence of a love, which was unfeigned, and genuine, he opened his whole ſoul to the woman, whom he adored. The General earneſtly intreated his niece, to pronounce the fate of her lover. But ſhe remained ſilent. The Marquis renewed his proteſtations, and redoubled his intreaty. In vain did he implore her to decide his deſtiny. In vain did he ſeize her hand, and waſhing it with tears, and kiſſes, conjure her not to render him the moſt miſerable of men, by ſo ſcornful a ſilence. The Counteſs was acutely affected;

affected; and ſhe turned her head aſide, in order to conceal the tears, which ſtreamed plenteouſly from her eyes. She roſe from her ſeat in evident perturbation: but ſhe was prevented by the Marquis from quitting the room.

In an agony of dreadful ſuſpence, the young man awaited his ſentence. At laſt, having made an effort to collect all her fortitude, and addreſſing both her lover, and the General; "Forbear, I charge you," ſaid ſhe, "to conſpire againſt my liberty, and "repoſe. My venerable uncle, oh, "do not diſtruſt the warmth of my "gratitude to you — and for you, "Tourville, were I to obey the feel-

"ing,

" ing, that throbs within my boſom,
" and follow the weakneſs and wander-
" ings of my heart, my love would
" not ſuffer me to doubt—Yet, let me
" beſeech you to pity me. I am un-
" able to ſurvive your diſpleaſure. I
" am below your reſentment. I am
" too weak to contend againſt you.
" Ah leave me; and ſeek not, I con-
" jure you, to deprive me of the only
" ſolace, that yet befriends me, that
" of keeping my vow, and my princi-
" ples inviolate."

As ſhe uttered theſe words, ſhe tore herſelf with a frantic, but determined look, from her lover. Tourville ſtill ſeemed to graſp his miſtreſs, after ſhe left

left the apartment. He ſtood fixed for ſome minutes in an attitude of deſpair, and ſenſeleſs, torpid anguiſh. The good General did not leave his friend in this ſtate. He employed every aſſiduity of friendſhip, and urged every topic of conſolation, by which the hopes of the Marquis might be revived, or his ſufferings alleviated. "You "are moſt aſſuredly, Marquis, the only "man," ſaid he, "whom ſhe has at all "favoured with any diſtinguiſhing "token of attention. Rely upon the "ſtedfaſt affections of your own heart, "and upon the ampleſt exertions of "my friendſhip for your final ſucceſs. "You are beſt entitled to the poſſeſ-"ſion of a woman, whoſe charms were

"polluted

" polluted and whoſe virtues were over-
" looked, by the man, who lately poſ-
" ſeſſed her. United at an early age to a
" huſband, who at the ſame time deſpiſ-
" ed her ſenſibilities, and wounded her
" delicacy with daily inſults, you ſee,
" my friend, a beautiful woman, whoſe
" boſom beats with the moſt hallowed
" emotions of love, and affection, in
" dread of the impulſes of her own
" heart. It is this dread of being
" hurried by thoſe ſenſibilities into a
" ſimilar deluſion, which has impoſed
" upon her the cruel oppreſſion of the
" vow, ſhe hopes to keep inviolate.
" I will inform you, alſo, of a domeſ-
" tic incident, which, more than the
" conduct of her late Count, worked

" upon

" upon the feelings of this amiable
" widow, and impelled her to the rigo-
" rous obligation, ſhe has preſcribed
" to her own paſſions. An enchanting
" girl, the partner of her infancy, and
" the companion of her life, expired
" in the arms of the Counteſs, a vic-
" tim to the unfeeling barbarity, and
" remorſeleſs tyranny of an huſband,
" whom ſhe idolized. This circum-
" ſtance, and the impreſſion, which
" the Count left on her mind, in-
" duced her to take a ſolemn vow,
" never to expoſe her ſenſibilities to a
" ſimilar ſhock, by any future union."
" Ah, great God," exclaimed the
Marquis, in an accent of deſpair, " are
" theſe the alarms, that agitate her

 " boſom?

" boſom? Will ſhe confound me with " ſuch accurſed monſters?" The good General, almoſt overpowered by the emotions, he had ſo viſibly excited in the boſom of Tourville, preſſed the hands of the Marquis, and attempted to ſooth the vehemence of his anguiſh by importunities of the moſt aſſiduous, and ſincere friendſhip.

The pain, which tortured the Marquis, was not more acute than that which afflicted the Counteſs. " Ah, " what have I done!" did ſhe exclaim, when ſhe retired to her own apartment. " I have been cheriſhing a ſen- " timent in my heart, from which I " cannot bear the divorce." But when a ſhower

a ſhower of tears ruſhed acroſs her cheeks, ſhe was powerfully reminded, that the rigor of her conduct had cauſed them to flow in equal abundance from the eyes of her unhappy lover.

The reflections, that revolved in the boſom of the Counteſs, were ſuch as leſs paſſionate lovers, and the world in general, would ridicule as the moſt romantic extravagance. She feared to become leſs lovely in the eyes of the Marquis. She dreaded, leſt the throne ſhe had fixed in his affections, ſhould be ſhaken, or deſtroyed by his indifference. She revolted from the idea of receiving leſs than adoration; of being in a ſtate, in which ſhe could no longer reckon his ſighs by her own; in which, when

her breaſt throbbed with impatience, ſhe knew that his would beat with a kindred movement; in ſhort, of becoming no more than a wife; of being bound by that cold, and inanimate connexion, in which love pays a tribute, rather than a ſacrifice, and the raptures of enjoyment are reiterated from a ſenſe of duty, rather than an impulſe of affection.

Theſe conſiderations determined the Counteſs Clairmont, to ſeparate herſelf for ever from Tourville. "For ever!" ſaid ſhe. "Can I pronounce the words? "Oh Tourville, that you were leſs "lovely! Had I only eſteemed your "virtues, gladly would I have conſented

"to

" to the union: and heaven that loves
" the union of virtue, would have ſanc-
" tified, and bleſſed it. But it is the
" exceſs, the madneſs of love, that
" oppoſes our inclinations. Alas! my
" amiable Marquis, my own ſad expe-
" rience, and the fate of my beloved
" Honoria, have taught me a leſſon, ſo
" diſhonorable to the character of your
" ſex. Light, verſatile, and incon-
" ſtant, your paſſions feed on variety;
" and the poſſeſſion of one heart is no
" guarantee to your affections. Alas!
" how different is woman! The cha-
" racters, that are once engraved in
" our hearts are never, never to be
" effaced; they remain till death itſelf
" the indelible monuments of a con-

" ſtancy, which death alone can inter-
" rupt. But what am I ſaying? I am
" reproaching my Tourville, with the
" diſhonor of his ſex. But let us not
" deceive ourſelves. What ſecurity
" can I have even from him? Should
" our union take place, never ſhould I
" ſurvive the decay of his affections.
" Let us then preſerve ourſelves from
" the hoſt of bitter regrets, which ſuch
" an union muſt entail upon us. Let
" us," ſaid the Counteſs, ſtill addreſ-
ſing Tourville, as if he had been pre-
ſent, " let us be free from the control
" of any other union, than that which
" has already linked our ſouls together.
" Let our love be unmingled with groſs
" and material perceptions. Let us
" live

" live in no other world, than the fair,
" and blooming creation of our own
" affections; and let the purity of our
" enjoyments be a ſecurity for their du-
" ration. There are thouſands, who
" offer impure and polluted vows to
" heaven. But ours, uttered from the
" very depths of the heart, ſhall be as
" pure, as the vivid current, that glows
" within it."

Then, perplexed with irreſolution, ſhe aſked herſelf, whether ſhe could behold the dangerous, and ſeductive Tourville proſtrate at her feet, and breathing his paſſionate vows to the ſupreme arbiter of his deſtiny. The clamours of the world alſo would be

excited; and how could ſhe oppoſe herſelf againſt the torrent of abuſe, which would overwhelm her reputation? A thouſand malicious reports would be circulated; and all would redicule, becauſe none could comprehend the myſterious union, by which the ſouls of two lovers were united.

Theſe diſquietudes brought on a ſlow fever; and the agitation of her mind had already debilitated and impaired the health of the Counteſs. She ordered herſelf therefore to be denied to all her viſitors, and by the advice of her Phyſician confined herſelf to her apartment. Although ſhe was not dangerouſly ill, the agony

of

of Tourville, when he heard the information, is ſcarcely to be deſcribed. He wrote to her in the moſt ardent ſtyle, which the warmth of his affections could dictate: and before he concluded his letter, he blotted it with a thouſand tears; nor were the emotions of the Counteſs leſs violent, as ſhe read it. She peruſed it over and over again; and every time ſhe read it, wept over it.

The General did not venture to urge the ſuit of his friend with vehemence. Tourville's intereſt, and the repoſe of his niece, required infinite precautions. Tourville, however, was too much impaſſioned to ſee the reaſons of the moderation,

deration, which the General uſed. A thouſand times did he attempt to collect ſome information concerning the health of the Counteſs; and often did he paſs the houſe, to obtain ſome intelligence that reſpected her. At length, vanquiſhed by the violence of his emotions, and alarmed at the dreadful uncertainty, in which he remained ſo long, concerning her indiſpoſition, by intrigue and intreaty, he ſucceeded in ſeducing one of her women, to introduce him into her apartment, during the courſe of the evening. He was induced to try this artifice, that he might have an opportunity of diſcovering whether he had

had been deceived by the report of the Counteſs's indiſpoſition.

The female attendants of the Counteſs, were ſo much attached to their miſtreſs, that they ventured to ſit up with her, notwithſtanding her injunctions to the contrary. This circumſtance facilitated the execution of the Marquis's project. At length the moment of his admiſſion arrived, and he entered the ſanctuary of his divinity. The place, the time, and the anxiety of his mind affected him ſo much that he was ſcarcely able to ſupport himſelf: and the palpitation of his heart was ſo violent, that he had ſcarcely the power of reſpiration.

In this ſtate of mind, the Marquis concealed himſelf behind a ſcreen, and enjoyed in ſecret the view of the woman, whom he adored. Her complexion was more than uſually beautiful. The languid poſture in which ſhe lay in the bed, her breaſts which were imperfectly covered, and the moiſtened ſweetneſs of her eyes, preſented a combination of charms to the attention of Tourville, that even had he not been the lover of the Counteſs, he would have found it very difficult to reſiſt. Unſuſpicious of obſervation, ſhe diſcovered a reſtleſs inquietude in her countenance. Deep, and audible ſighs eſcaped each of the lovers; and the emotion of the Marquis was ſo

great,

great, that Henrietta, the female attendant of the Counteſs, began to tremble at the conſequences of the imprudence, of which ſhe had been guilty in admitting him.

Some minutes had elapſed, during which this perturbation was ſeverely felt by Tourville, and Madame Clairmont, when the latter ordered lights to be brought to her bed-ſide. Never did any man commit greater violence on his feelings, than the Marquis did, by putting conſtraint upon himſelf, when he obſerved the idol of his ſoul fix her eyes upon a letter, which he inſtantly knew was that, he himſelf had ſent her. She peruſed it again

and

and again: and as often did ſhe bathe it with her tears. Henrietta with difficulty prevented him from ruſhing into the arms of her miſtreſs. But her prayers, her intreaties proved ineffectual. At the inſtant, when the Counteſs had preſſed the letter to her lips, the Marquis ruſhed from the place of his concealment, in a phrenzy of paſſion, and proſtrating himſelf before the Counteſs, implored her to pardon his temerity and preſumption.

The ſurpriſe, and terror of the Counteſs, are ſcarcely to be deſcribed by language. It was ſome time, before ſhe was conſcious, that ſhe was alone with Tourville, and before ſhe was able

to

to call for her attendant. The appearance of Henrietta, gave her an opportunity of recovering her firmneſs; when with a look of virtuous ſcorn, and indignation, that pierced the heart of the Marquis, ſhe commanded him to retire. He attempted to obey the mandate, but he was fettered to the ſpot. In the agony of his deſpair, he attempted to utter a few incoherent words, in juſtification of the indelicacy, he had committed. "The only "penitence you can ſhew," cried the Counteſs, "for the inſult, is from this "moment, to ſhun my preſence." Without giving him time to anſwer, ſhe ordered Henrietta to direct the Marquis to the door, who left the houſe,

houſe, that contained all that was dear to him, in an extacy of grief, and anguiſh, which I ſhall not attempt to deſcribe.

The violence of his ſufferings, during the whole of the night, had almoſt deprived him of his reaſon: and when the General, and the Duke called upon him in the morning, they found him in a ſtate of mind, truly deplorable, and alarming. For a conſiderable time, they could only draw from him, half uttered, and incoherent words. But when they had at laſt diſcovered the cauſe of his diſorder, they attempted, but in vain, to calm his agitations, by the reaſonings, which friendſhip

and

and compaſſion uſually dictate on ſuch occaſions. "Wretch that I am," exclaimed Tourville, "I have loſt her "for ever. The inſult I have com-"mitted on her delicacy, is inex-"piable. Her alarms, her inexorable "command, and the expreſſion of her "countenance, tell me that the de-"cree is not to be repealed. But the "baniſhment though ſevere, will not be "very long; and the violence of my "anguiſh is its only remedy."

While he was abſorbed in theſe gloomy contemplations, a letter from Madame Volmeul was brought to him. At firſt he forgot to open it; but the ſervant, who waited for an anſwer, became

came ſo importunate, that he was at length obliged to read it. It was an invitation from the Baroneſs; and he returned an anſwer to it, that he would obey her commands. In his preſent ſtate of mind, he would gladly have eſcaped the perſecution, to which he was expoſed, by the overweening attentions of the Baroneſs. But he could not neglect the engagement, after he had made it; though every thing was now wearifome, and diſguſting, but nothing more ſo, than the Baroneſs de Volmeul. This lady ſtill harboured her former intentions upon the Marquis; and ſhe had not relinquiſhed the idea of faſcinating that young man, by the artifices, which ſhe thought it

ſcarcely

ſcarcely poſſible that any man could reſiſt.

The indifference, which the Marquis had uniformly ſhewn to the tender Baroneſs, inſtead of damping, had encreaſed her ardour; and ſhe was ridiculous enough to dignify the affection ſhe felt for him, by the name of tender ſentiment. She had no doubt, that the Marquis would be caught in the net, in which ſhe had entangled ſo many admirers. They had indeed ſtruggled and reſiſted at firſt; but they ſoon yielded to their deſtinies, and became the captives of the tender, and impaſſioned Baroneſs. Beſides, ſhe was tormented almoſt to death, at the attachment,

ment, which Tourville had diſcovered, for her rival, the beautiful Counteſs of Clairmont. The progreſs of their mutual affection, on which ſhe had been a vigilant and obſervant ſpy, confirmed and aggravated her chagrin.

In all faſhionable houſes, there are domeſtics, who have no reluctance in betraying the ſecrets of the family, in which they live. The Baroneſs by the mode of intrigue, which is uſually found to be efficacious on theſe occaſions, had ſeduced one of the ſervants of her rival, to give her the information, which ſhe wanted. What then, was her joy, when ſhe heard that Tourville

Tourville had been prohibited from all future intercourſe with the Counteſs !

It appeared, therefore, to the Counteſs, that the important opportunity of making a declaration of love to the Marquis, was at length arrived : and it was for this purpoſe, that the Baroneſs had ſummoned Tourville to a tête-a-tête with her, that evening.

The wretched Marquis, abſorbed in the contemplation of his own miſery, had determined, to avoid all future perſecution of this nature, by a frank acknowledgment of the ſtate of his heart. For this purpoſe it was, that he accepted her invitation.

When

When he entered her dreſſing-room he found her, languid from apparent indiſpoſition, and reclining in an amorous poſture on the ſofa. A voluptuous attitude, as much vivacity as ſhe could call up into her eyes, and an expoſure of the neck, which the figure, and age of the Baroneſs, did not render quite ſo irreſiſtible, as ſhe imagined, theſe were the artillery, ſhe had reſolved to play off, on the devoted Tourville. She was evidently dreſſed for the character, ſhe intended to aſſume that evening. But her ſkill was ineffectual. Without youth, without modeſty, ſhe appeared in the eyes of the Marquis a moſt diſguſting contraſt to the woman, of whom he was enamoured. He had lately ſeen the idol

of

of his heart, in the moſt lovely, and enchanting diſhabille; and the recollection of this circumſtance, rendered the Baroneſs an object of loathing, and averſion.

At his entrance, an involuntary ſigh eſcaped him. The penetration of the Baroneſs interpreted this into a preſage of ſucceſs. She began, by reproaching him with having neglected her. "Misfortune," returned the Marquis, "makes us Barbarians." "Misfortune!" exclaimed the Baroneſs. "Can the "Marquis de Tourville ever have "known misfortune? But I know the "ſource of it. Believe me, Marquis, "your ſufferings are no ſecret to me.

"When

"When I thought you were happy,
"with regard to the object on whom
"you had fixed your affections, I felt
"a ſatisfaction in ſuppoſing that ob-
"ject to have been worthy of Tour-
"ville"—Here the Marquis would have interrupted her.—"Let me pro-
"ceed," ſaid the Baroneſs. "The
"woman on whom the happineſs of
"Tourville in any degree depended,
"had a natural claim to my reſpect and
"even my gratitude. But as ſoon as I
"found that your conſtancy has been
"repaid with ſcorn, your affection re-
"turned with contempt, as ſoon as I
"learned the ſtory of her ingratitude to
"the beſt, and tendereſt of lovers,
"from that moment, I fear, by my
"hatred

" hatred of the Counteſs, I have too
" plainly betrayed my ardent affec-
" tion for you.—Alas, Marquis, long
" has this ſecret been concealed like
" a corroding ſerpent, in my breaſt.
" Yet why ſhould I diſſemble? I have
" poured out to you my whole ſoul;
" in return, I may expect the ſame
" confidence from you." " Alas,
" Madam," replied the Marquis, " what
" is it that you require of me? I will
" ſpeak with ingenuouſneſs and with-
" out diſſimulation. I will neither in-
" ſult the goodneſs of your under-
" ſtanding, nor degrade my own feel-
" ings, by diſſembling on ſuch a ſub-
" ject. Your condeſcenſion does me
" infinite honour; and I ſhall never

" ceaſe to recollect with the ſincereſt
" gratitude the eſteem with which you
" have ſpoken of me. But this, Ma-
" dam, is the only homage, which I
" can offer you."

This unexpected, but ingenuous reply, fixed the Baroneſs for ſome time in a ſtate of ſpeechleſs ſurpriſe. But recovering herſelf in a few moments, ſhe began to play off the artillery which ſhe uſually had recourſe to, on theſe occaſions; and every artifice, which her ingenuity could ſuggeſt, was directed againſt the heart of the invincible Tourville. " Yes, my good friend,
" I am charmed with your ingenuouſ-
" neſs. Your heart ſtill bleeds with
" the

" the anguiſh, inflicted by the relent-
" leſs Counteſs. Alas! I ſympathiſe
" with it's ſufferings. But," con-
tinued ſhe, preſſing his hand with emo-
tion, " you ſhall burſt the galling
" chain that binds you to your tyrant.
" Let me beſeech you to ſummon up a
" becoming fortitude; and I doubt not
" when you are weaned from this weak
" attachment, that my ſentiments to-
" wards you will meet the reward they
" deſerve."

Tourville appealed to his heart, which he declared was irrevocably de-voted to the Counteſs. But ſtill the Baroneſs contended againſt it's teſti-mony. The Marquis was alarmed at

her perſeverance. She had compelled him to ſit very cloſe to her on the ſofa; and every minute, ſhe began to make advances, which were at that time peculiarly diſguſting to Tourville. At this embarraſſing moment, which the Baroneſs had imagined to be the moſt favorable to her deſires, and which the Marquis thought the moſt tormenting, he had ever paſſed, the Duke was announced, and Tourville, ſeizing the opportunity with an eagerneſs, which was very evident, with a cold, and formal ſalute left Madame de Volmeul, almoſt overpowered with rage, deſpair, and ſelf-humiliation.

The

The Duke de Nouville, as he entered the room, perceived her agitation, which ſhe vainly ſtrove to conceal. The Duke, who held the Baroneſs in ſovereign contempt, was not very fearful of offending her delicacy. Without the leaſt apology for the queſtion, he aſked her the cauſe of the apparent ill humor, in which he had the misfortune to find her. The Baroneſs could not diſſemble; though ſhe endeavored to conceal what had taken place; and from the manner in which ſhe ſpoke of the Marquis, Nouville almoſt gueſſed at the circumſtance. At firſt he addreſſed her with an air of gallantry, and the attentions, which he knew were ſo gratifying to the Baro-

neſs. But her vanity and her paſſions always coincided with each other ſo minutely, that ſhe miſtook the levity, with which he converſed, and the *perſifflage*, that he played of, for genuine admiration. Every compliment, which he paid her beauty, or her underſtanding, contributed to diſſolve the reſerve ſhe attempted to keep on the ſubject: till the Duke began gradually to perceive, that ſhe was inflamed with revenge both againſt Tourville and the Counteſs, though ſhe did not mention the names of the lovers.

The Duke dreaded, as the common friend of the Marquis, and the Counteſs, the effects of the hoſtility, which

the Baroneſs virtually declared againſt them. It was neceſſary, therefore, to aſſuage her reſentment. The only mode of calming her, was that of making downright propoſals of love to her, in his own perſon. But it was all in vain. Reſentment ſtifled for a while the imperious paſſions of vanity, and deſire, in the boſom of Madame Volmeul. She ſcarcely liſtened to the vows, and adorations of the Duke. The affront, ſhe had received from Tourville, tormented her to ſuch a degree, that ſhe could cheriſh no other idea.

Finding that the ſtratagem was unceſsful, Nouville was conſiderably perplexed, in his efforts, to lull the re-

ſentment of the Baroneſs to reſt. He knew, that the Counteſs might ſuffer very conſiderably, from the perſecution of her rival. The father of the Counteſs, alſo, who at this time was expected in Paris, after an abſence of a few months, wore the chains of the tender Madame de Volmeul; and the Baroneſs had obtained a complete aſcendant over him. This circumſtance made the Duke extremely anxious to ſoften the reſentment of the Baroneſs, as ſhe had ſo much influence over the fate of the lovers.

The ingenuity of the Duke at length adopted an expedient, which had a ſtrong probability of ſucceſs. After one

one or two remarks, by way of introduction to the communication he was about to make, he obſerved to the Baroneſs, that the Marquis was an object of compaſſion, rather than of reſentment. The intimation was ſucceſsful; and the myſterious circumſtance was immediately apprehended by the penetration of the Baroneſs. "Ah, Duke," ſaid ſhe, "I under-"ſtand you. And truly," ſhe continued, with a ſarcaſtic ſneer, "I "ſhould ſuppoſe that his condition is "deplorable, if I might judge from "his unnatural, and ſingular coldneſs "on certain occaſions."

The Duke was delighted to find that his hint had produced the effect, he wiſhed for. He was determined to confirm an idea, which was ſo auſpicious to the repoſe of Tourville. "Yes, "you have moſt preciſely expreſſed my "idea," ſaid he. "His condition is "truly deplorable. I was totally at a "loſs for a phraſe to expreſs, what I "meaned. But you females, among "other advantages over us, have an "inconteſtable ſuperiority in the ad- "mirable talent of being intelligible "on theſe points without being inde- "licate." The compliment produced a ſmile on the countenance of the Baroneſs; and it was a compliment, which gratified her the more, as ſhe was not conſcious

conſcious of deſerving the praiſe of decorum, and delicacy, on the occaſions, to which the Duke ſo artfully alluded. "Seriouſly then," ſaid ſhe, "ſeriouſly, the ſituation of your couſin is as wretched, as you ſeem to "intimate?" "Ah, Madam," returned the Duke, "how can we ac-"count for his indifference to your "charms, unleſs he had been viſited "by this calamity? What more con-"vincing proof do you require?" "But he adores the Counteſs Clair-"mont," exclaimed the Baroneſs. "And that," replied the Duke, that "very circumſtance renders the fact "unqueſtionable. You know the "Counteſs is a woman of ſentiment.

" Sentiment either takes the lead of her " paſſions, or has totally abſorbed " them. It is only in this character, " that Tourville loves her. Alas, " there are no other attactions for my " unfortunate relation." " This then " certainly pleads his excuſe," ſaid Madame Volmeul, who was now weaned more and more from her paſſion for the Marquis, and more flattered by the affected attentions of Nouville. " Ah " me, is it poſſible?" ſhe exclaimed once or twice: and then endeavoring to force a bluſh on her cheeks; " You will agree with me, however, " that his manners, and appearance by " no means denote ſuch a misfortune." " By no means," anſwered the Duke, with

with a look of ſerioufneſs, which he was ſcarcely able to aſſume. "It is "not, however, the defect of nature, "but the conſequence of a moſt un-"paralleled misfortune."

Theſe words excited an invincible curioſity in the breaſt of the tender Baroneſs. She began to overwhelm him with a thouſand queſtions. The Duke proteſted that neither the laws of honor, nor of friendſhip, would ſuffer him to reveal ſo horrible a myſtery, and betray the confidence which had been repoſed in him.

The Baroneſs ſhewed a ſolicitude on this occaſion, which few of her ſex, however

however they might employ their own conjectures on the ſubject, would have ventured to exhibit. "I will not ſup-
"poſe," ſaid ſhe, "that your reſerve
"on this topic proceeds from any diſ-
"truſt of the inviolable ſecrecy, with
"which I ſhould preſerve the commu-
"nication in my own boſom. But I
"will do juſtice to your motives. I
"have doubt of their purity. Never-
"theleſs, we are alone. My own
"modeſty requires no better protec-
"tion: and you have the privilege of
"proceeding in the narrative, without
"offending my delicacy, becauſe I am
"perſuaded, that you will relate it,
"with the addreſs, for which, I know,
"you are diſtinguiſhed."

The

The Duke pauſed for a few moments, for the purpoſe of framing a ſtory. Madame Volmeul was agitated by the moſt vehement curioſity; and before the Duke began his relation, ſhe locked the door of the apartment, to prevent any interruption of a narrative, in the ſubject of which ſhe was ſo ſtrongly intereſted. Then with freſh importunities, ſhe aſked Nouville a thouſand queſtions upon the myſterious topic, he was about to diſcloſe. "Since you are determined, Madame," replied he, "to hear the ſtory of "Tourville's misfortune, let me be- "ſeech you to prepare yourſelf for a "moſt extraordinary and ſingular re-

"cital,

" cital, and to guard againſt the emo-
" tions of you own heart, in hearing it.

" The Marquis, you know, has re-
" turned to Paris within a few months,
" after an abſence from France of
" ſeven years. When he entered on
" his travels, he was ſcarcely ſixteen;
" and from that early age to twenty-
" two, he has been gradually improv-
" ing in every ſpecies of external and
" intellectual accompliſhment. His
" addreſs, his wit, and the refinement
" of his ſoul, introduced him under
" very great advantages, into the beſt
" circles in the countries, through
" which he travelled. Every where,
" it was the faſhion to careſs, enter-
" tain,

" tain, and panegyrize the young Mar-
" quis. He was univerſally admired
" by the women, and reſpected by his
" own ſex; and notwithſtanding his
" extreme youth, he was ſurrounded by
" pleaſures, at the time he was ſtudi-
" ous of improvement. And now,
" even in Paris, his reputation is eſ-
" tabliſhed in every part of the metro-
" polis. His figure is manly, and
" intereſting. His manners are ele-
" gant; and he has a ſpecies of polite-
" neſs, which is the more faſcinating,
" as it is not the artificial, and me-
" chanical politeſſe, which is ſo eaſily
" acquired, or ſo eaſily aſſumed; but
" becauſe it ſprings from real goodneſs
" and benevolence of heart. And ex-
" cept

" cept the misfortune of having of-
" fended the Baroness de Volmeul—"

" Proceed," exclaimed the Baro-
ness, interrupting him, " for hea-
" ven's sake, Duke, proceed to some-
" thing, with which I am not ac-
" quainted. The panegyric of the
" Marquis is insipid, from repeti-
" tion."

" I could not forbear," answered Nouville, " expatiating on the merits " of my relation: especially as those " qualities have been the source of his " calamity."

" Proceed,"

" Proceed," ſaid the Baroneſs, impatiently.

" It was at Venice," continued the Duke, " that this horrible tragedy " was acted. When he had been in " that luxurious city about a month, " he was unfortunately invited to a " fête, which a perſon of diſtinction " gave, in honor of his arrival. The " entertainment was ſplendid, and " magnificent. Ingenuity itſelf was " exhauſted in the numerous gratifi- " cations, which were deviſed to play " on the imaginations, and ſooth the " ſenſes of the company. A Gon- " dola party cloſed the fête. When the " entertainment was over, a Gondo-

" lier

" lier drawing Tourville aſide, with
" apparent caution, and reſerve, pre-
" ſented him with a letter, written by
" a female hand. The ſtyle of the epiſ-
" tle, would have turned the brain of
" any other man, than the Marquis.
" It breathed the moſt ardent paſſion;
" and the diction in which it was
" dreſſed, and the ſentiment it con-
" veyed, were ſuch, as to excite a myſ-
" terious paſſion in the breaſt of the
" Marquis, for his unknown correſ-
" pondent.

" The incognita had ſeen, and loved
" him. She told him, that ſhe burned
" with the moſt impatient deſire, and as
" a proof of her affection, beſought him

" to

" to follow the directions of the perſon,
" ſhe had intruſted with the billet,
" that they might have an interview,
" on the enſuing evening.

" Tourville was endued with ſen-
" ſibilities, which did not permit him
" to forebode any danger, that might
" ariſe, from the intrigue. With the
" moſt lingering impatience, he await-
" ed the hour of aſſignation; and he
" chided the tardy progreſs of time,
" which for the happineſs of lovers,
" ſhould have been gifted with wings
" of lightening. At length it arrived,
" and his boſom throbbed with emo-
" tion. A ſuperb Gondola was pre-
" pared for him, on which he em-
" barked

" barked with tranſport. An hour
" paſſed on the water, which ſeemed
" to him a century: when at laſt, the
" noiſe of the oars was ſuſpended, and
" the Gondola ſtopt at the bottom of a
" garden, the moſt beautiful, and
" magnificent, he had ever ſeen in
" Venice.

" It was a ſerene ſummer evening.
" The ſcene was tranquil; and nothing
" interrupted the ſtillneſs of the hour,
" but the daſhing of oars, which were
" indiſtinctly heard at intervals. Tour-
" ville, as he entered the garden, was
" almoſt compelled to diſtruſt the teſ-
" timony of his ſenſes. The place
" ſeemed to have been embelliſhed by
" the

" the hand of enchantment. As he
" approached the houſe, the imperfect
" melody of voices, falling in ſweet
" murmurs upon his ear, filled him
" with a tranſport, he never knew be-
" fore. What were his emotions, when
" two female figures in maſques ad-
" vanced courteouſly towards him, and
" conducted him to a chateau, the
" magnificence of which correſponded
" to the beauty of the garden.

" Every apartment, through which
" he paſſed, vied with the former one,
" in ſplendor, till at laſt he found
" himſelf in a room, the elegance of
" which ſurpaſſed all deſcription. Here
" his conductors diſappeared; and

" having

" having locked the door upon him,
" almoſt left the Marquis in a ſtate of
" doubt, whether or not he was under
" the influence of enchantment. Every
" thing around him ſeemed to confirm
" the idea of enchantment. Fragrant
" perfumes were burning on an altar,
" decked with garlands, and dedicated
" to love; and at the very moment,
" when Tourville uttered an ardent in-
" vocation of the deity, that preſided
" over it, the altar diſappeared, and a
" goddeſs ſeemed to riſe from the
" ground, endued with all the charms,
" that the fancy of poets have attri-
" buted to the divinity of love. She
" was in the very bloom of youth; her
" hair was crowned with flowers, that

" ſeemed

" ſeemed to have been dipt in heaven.
" Her mien was cœleſtial, and her
" eyes ſhot ten thouſand fires.

" Tourville claſped the Goddeſs in
" his arms; then he threw himſelf at
" her feet, and pleaded his paſſion with
" that reſiſtleſs energy, which love
" never fails to inſpire. His addreſs
" was ſo ſucceſsful, that the firſt ſigh
" of reciprocal love, was the laſt ſtrug-
" gle of contending virtue."

" She muſt have been an intereſting
" creature," ſaid the Baroneſs.

" To Tourville ſhe was an angel,"
continued the Duke. " The firſt en-

" joyment

" joyment was a prelude to a night of
" rapture. Never were his eyes bleſt
" with the ſight of ſo much beauty.
" Never did he feel ſuch violence of
" paſſion; a paſſion, which was the
" more vehement, from the conſci-
" ouſneſs of it's being reciprocal. The
" intruſive, and envious beams of day
" did not intercept the current of their
" bliſs. In her arms, he forgot the
" day, nay the univerſe itſelf. He
" forgot alſo, that he was expoſed to
" danger, when the door of the cham-
" ber was broke open with a ſudden
" and violent uproar. In vain did the
" attendants of the lady attempt to ſooth
" the indignation of the huſband; for
" it was the huſband, that entered the
" apartment.

" apartment. He had ſuſpected the
" fidelity of his wife; and to aſcertain
" whether his ſuſpicions were juſt, he
" had purpoſely returned from a pre-
" tended journey, at an hour, when
" the two lovers were careleſsly indul-
" ging their mutual affections.

" The lovely woman trembled, when
" ſhe ſaw the jealouſy and ferocity,
" depictured on the countenance of her
" Lord. But ſhe trembled more for
" Tourville, who had endeavoured to
" defend himſelf with his ſword. Un-
" fortunately a number of armed men
" were in readineſs, to aſſiſt the jealous
" huſband. The ſtrength, and courage
" of the Marquis were ineffectually op-

 " poſed

" poſed to the force of numbers. Then
" his beautiful miſtreſs threw herſelf
" between her gallant, and the ſwords
" of his enemies. The fury of the huſ-
" band was redoubled: and the bar-
" barian, ſeizing her by the arm,
" with a poignard, that he held in his
" hand, expiated her inconſtancy, in
" the ſight of the diſtracted Tourville.

" The Marquis endeavoured to
" ruſh upon his ſword, when he wit-
" neſſed the murderous ſacrifice, of the
" woman he adored. He was diſ-
" armed, and his life ſecured at the
" expence of—Oh God of love, why
" did'ſt thou permit the profanation!"

—Here

—Here the Duke faultered, and ſuſpended his narrative.

"Go on," exclaimed the Baroneſs, "I die with impatience."

"Well, Madam," continued Nouville, "the cataſtrophe metamorphoſed "an Hercules, into an Abelard."

"Extremely ſhocking," ſaid the Baroneſs coolly.

"They took advantage of his faint-"ing away," ſaid the Duke, "and "you may judge of the horrors, to "which he awoke. The hope of "vengeance only determined him to

" ſupport his exiſtence. The aſſaſſin
" eſcaped his vengeance. He lan-
" guiſhed for more than a year in a
" ſtate of wretched confinement, and
" his grief, and reſentment alike re-
" tarded his recovery. When his
" health was reſtored, the huſband,
" who dreaded the reſentment of the
" Marquis, was ſo alarmed at the ap-
" prehenſions of the conſequences,
" that his conſtitution was gradually
" undermined by the perturbations,
" that preyed upon him, till death re-
" moved him from the terrors of pub-
" lic juſtice, and the vengeance of
" Tourville."

" But

" But what became of Tourville ?" exclaimed the Baroneſs.

" Diſappointed by the unexpected " death of the murderer of his miſtreſs, " he reſolved to quit Venice for ever. " The adventure has been buried in " the deepeſt ſilence, till it has been " drawn by my confidence in you, " from a boſom, which is always ready " to pour out all that it contains, when " you require it. The ſecret will find " in your breaſt a ſacred depoſitory. " As for my unhappy relation, time, " the medicine for every grief, a con- " ſtitutional habit of philoſophy, and " the diverſified objects, that have di- " vided his attention during his tour,

"have contributed to ſoften the an-
"guiſh, that he felt. But he is viſi-
"bly under the influence of a melan-
"choly, from which he will proba-
"bly never be relieved."

"Why, it is not at all extraordi-
"nary," exclaimed the Baroneſs, "that
"he ſhould be conſiderably affected by
"the diſagreeable accident, you have
"related to me. But your memory in
"the narrative is as accurate, as if it
"had been your own hiſtory."

The Duke ſmiled at the compli-
ment.

The Baroneſs aſked him, whether
the

the Marquis had recited the ſtory himſelf?

"No," returned Nouville, "he ſent "me a minute account of the affair, "in a letter, I had the honor of re-"ceiving from him on the ſubject. I "have read it more than once, and "have, therefore, impreſſed it on my "memory."

"I vow to heaven," rejoined the Baroneſs, "that I could repeat it as "well."

"I am terrified to death, leſt you "ſhould repeat it too frequently," replied the Duke.

Madame Volmeul pretended to be chagrined at the ſuſpicion; and the Duke reiterated his importunities for ſecrecy, becauſe he knew that it was the moſt effectual means to perſuade her to divulge it. But, beſides the deſire he felt, to bring the Baroneſs into ridiculous ſituations, by the propenſity, with which the narrative would inſpire her, of revealing the ſecret, a notion entered ſuddenly into his mind, which made him ſtill more anxious to put the ſtory into circulation. It will be ſeen hereafter, whether he judged correctly.

The converſation began gradually to aſſume a tone of gaiety, and vivacity: and

and Madame de Volmeul, though ſhe pretended to ſympathize with the Marquis, was very evidently gratified with the relation, ſhe had heard, as well as conſiderably amuſed at the ideal, and viſionary love, the Counteſs and Tourville felt for each other. The ill-humor which the coldneſs of the Marquis occaſioned, had rendered her inſenſible to the mock-gallantries of the Duke. She was, therefore, extremely deſirous of hearing a repetition of the propoſals to which for once in her life, ſhe had been deaf. But when ſhe heard Nouville praiſe in terms of cold and unfeeling eulogium the virtue, with which ſhe had reſiſted his advances,

ſhe was conſiderably alarmed, leſt he ſhould not renew them.

As for the Duke, his purpoſe was obtained. He had diſarmed the vengeance, which was aimed at the two lovers; and the only anſwer he was diſpoſed to make to the amorous importunities of the Baroneſs, was a ſort of banter, in which he lamented her rigor, and ſeemed to deprecate her inflexibility. This was a ſevere ſhock to Madame Volmeul. She had ſuffered two diſappointments in the courſe of the morning; though ſhe had carried on the ſiege with ſingular ſkill and dexterity. The Baroneſs, however, found ſome conſolation in the

ſtory

ſtory ſhe had heard, for the wounds, her vanity had ſuſtained. The hope of becoming a ſubject of faſhionable converſation, and the poſſeſſion of the valuable ſecret, with which ſhe had been entruſted, promiſed a conſiderable repaſt for the omnivorous vanity, with which the Baroneſs was endued.

It was impoſſible that the ſecret ſhould not be divulged by the Baroneſs. She had always a ſpecies of caſuiſtry, by which the publication of a ſecret was juſtified to her own conſcience. It was communicated to her by a friend, a relation of the Marquis. What obligation of ſecrecy was there impoſed upon her, if there was none

that

that was binding on the Duke? Beſides, if ſhe communicated it to her friends, ſhe was determined to exact a promiſe of inviolable ſecrecy, before ſhe told it.

Theſe reaſonings lulled the conſcience of the Baroneſs to reſt. She, therefore, gave immediate orders for her chariot, for the purpoſe of making a viſit to the whole circle of her female acquaintance; and ſuch was her anxiety to diſperſe the ſecret, that ſhe left word with thoſe, who were not at home when ſhe called, that ſhe had ſomething of importance to communicate.

Among

Among thoſe, to whom the Baroneſs was not admitted, was the Counteſs Clairmont. She had not yet received any viſits, ſince her indiſpoſition. The Counteſs had gradually perſuaded herſelf, that ſhe was entirely weaned from the attachment, which ſhe had cheriſhed for Tourville. The mode, in which this deluſive perſuaſion operated, was ſuch as to confirm, and ſtrengthen it. Her reſentment at the unpardonable indiſcretion, of which he had been guilty, and the horror ſhe felt, that Tourville ſhould have committed that indiſcretion, lulled her heart into the ſoothing conſciouſneſs of having regained it's freedom. The man, who could condeſcend to tamper with

with the fidelity of her waiting woman, who could ruſh at ſuch a time into her preſence, and who evidently valued her affections at ſo low a rate, as to commit an act, which rendered him for ever unworthy, not only of her love, but even of her forgiveneſs, in the eyes of the Counteſs could feel but a ſlight emotion of love or affection himſelf: and it was evident, that he was inſpired only by the overbearing and riotous impulſes of a ſenſual, and unrefined paſſion. Theſe reflections overwhelmed her with the tendereſt ſenſations of grief, and regret. But the Counteſs little ſuſpected that what ſhe thought were the emotions of virtue, were, in reality the pangs of love.

The

The Counteſs trembled even to hear the name of Tourville: and ſhe ſuppoſed that the dread which ſhe felt ſprung from an averſion to the Marquis, which had rooted out every veſtige of love from her boſom. In this ſtate of mind, a retirement from the world, ſeemed to be the only means, by which ſhe could be completely emancipated, and confirm her freedom.

She was, therefore, not very highly gratified by the importunities of the Baroneſs, who was determined to ſee her. Beſides, it was with much reluctance that ſhe at laſt promiſed to have an interview with her, early the next day, as ſhe had made an engagement to viſit

viſit the Princeſs B——, at her country ſeat, which was ſeveral miles diſtant from Paris.

The Baroneſs had abridged the number of her viſits, that ſhe might increaſe that of her confidants. Theſe in their turn, circulated the narrative under the ſame injunctions of ſecrecy, as thoſe under which they received it. "Why, Counteſs," exclaimed the Baroneſs, as ſhe entered Madame Clairmont's apartment, "is not this a "trick of coquetry to feign indiſpoſi-"tion? Your languor makes you more "lovely than ever; and your face be-"comes ſickneſs moſt prodigiouſly." The Counteſs replied with a cool inclination

clination of the head. "Moſt inſuf-
"ferable," ſaid the Baroneſs to her-
ſelf, "moſt odious creature, nothing
"moves her. She is as cold as ice,
"and not even flattery can ſoften
"her."

"Ah Counteſs," continued ſhe,
"it is not conceivable how I love you!
"It was my affection for you, that in-
"duced me to break in upon your pri-
"vacy. But I have other reaſons,
"which you will not eaſily gueſs."

The Counteſs aſked a thouſand po-
lite queſtions concerning her family,
and the marriage of her ſiſter: and en-
deavoured to force a converſation on
the

the topics, which her politeneſs thought were intereſting to the perſon, who was with her.

"You have, for a woman of ſenſe," cried the Baroneſs, interrupting her, "you have a ſet of moſt ſingular ideas. "Do you imagine, that I have nothing "of more importance, to communi- "cate, than the affairs of my own fa- "mily? Alas, it is the Marquis de "Tourville, who is at preſent the "theme of my reflections, and the ſub- "ject of the ſecret, which I am about "to pour into your boſom."

At the mention of this name, the Counteſs ſtarted with an emotion of horror.

horror. "What folly!" continued the voluble Baroneſs. "Ceaſe, my "dear friend, to be alarmed at the paſ- "ſion of Tourville; you have nothing "to fear from it. You are however "ignorant of the adventure, which the "Marquis ſuſtained at Venice. Had "you known the circumſtances, your "ſenſibilities would have remained "unwounded. It is for the purpoſe "of reſcuing your virtue from theſe "apprehenſions, that I have taken "this opportunity of telling you the "ſecret."

"I am not at all anxious to hear it," replied the Counteſs, "and pro- "bably

" bably as little alarmed reſpecting the
" Marquis, as yourſelf."

" Liſten," ſaid the Baroneſs. " I
" beſeech you to hear me. But for an
" event, the particulars of which I
" learned yeſterday for the firſt time,
" no man upon the earth is really more
" dangerous to the ſenſibility of ſuch a
" heart as your's, than Tourville. I
" am about to reveal it; let me con-
" fide in your ſecrecy!"

Then with all the rhtorical pow ers, with which ſhe was endowed, the Baroneſs repeated every word of the narrative, the Duke had told her. During the recital, the unhappy Counteſs was

torn

torn by a thouſand contending emotions. Confuſion, perplexity, ſurpriſe, jealouſy mixed with a tenderneſs for the murdered rival, of whom Tourville had been ſo much enamoured, all theſe contradictory ſentiments crowded in conflict upon her reflections. But the feeling, that predominated, was the anguiſh ſhe felt, when ſhe knew that the Marquis was unhappy.

Never, never did the image of the abſent Tourville preſent itſelf to her mind, in a more delightful form. Capable of inſpiring affection, without offending virtue, of feeling love, unadulterated by paſſion, he ſeemed a ſort of

of myſterious, and ſupernatural being, diveſted of human frailties, and elevated above human imperfections. She wiſhed to put off her engagement with the Princeſs, that ſhe might enjoy an interview with the Marquis. His fault entirely vaniſhed from her remembrance; and her imagination repoſed in the contemplation of his virtues.

A ſingular circumſtance corroborated the narrative ſhe had heard, and compelled her however incredulouſly ſhe had at firſt liſtened to the Baroneſs, to believe the tranſaction. Tourville, in the preſence of the Counteſs, and the General, had intimated, that he was obliged to quit Venice, from ine-

vitable

vitable neceſſity. The fact was, that a ſtratagem had been deviſed to aſſaſſinate him by poiſon. He had incenſed the wife of a ſenator in that city beyond all hopes of forgiveneſs, by refuſing to elope with her. The diſcovery of this dreadful plot had been made by the cicisbeo of the lady, who had prevented it's completion, when the Marquis was almoſt in the act of ſwallowing the wine, into which the poiſon had been infuſed, while he was ſupping with the woman, who was ſo vehemently enamored of him.

The Marquis had never fully explained the reaſon of his precipitate departure from Venice. It was, therefore,

natural that the Counteſs Clairmont ſhould aſcribe it to the circumſtances, which had been ſo amply detailed to her. In confirmation of her opinions, the very letter, which Tourville had written to her, and which he himſelf beheld her reading with ſo much emotion, was clothed in a ſtyle, and contained ſentiments, which ſeemed to bear no relation whatever to the paſſion of lovers, and to the ordinary ſenſations, which that paſſion produces in the breaſts of men. It expreſſed a chaſtized ſentiment; it had no voluptuouſneſs, or deſire. It diſplayed a wiſh only to be preſent with her, to gaze upon her, and to feel the enjoy-

ments

ments of a reſerved, and awful contemplation of the object, he adored.

The Counteſs, however, was egregiouſly deceived in the reflections, which this narrative had excited in her boſom. But the error was ſupported by reaſonings, which were plauſible, and ſpecious. The Marquis, in truth, looked forward with more than common rapture, to an union with the Counteſs; and the flame, that burned within him, acquired a degree of energy and fierceneſs, from the delicacy, with which he covered it. This delicacy, this heroiſm of delicacy, to the Counteſs, who had imbibed a notion, which was rather unfavorable to

the ſex, appeared above the reach of man; and it confirmed, therefore, the ſtory, which the modeſt Baroneſs Volmeul had juſt communicated.

It has been remarked, that at firſt the Counteſs ſuſpected the truth of the recital. The Baroneſs was diſingenuous, and credulous: and the Counteſs never gave her confidence, where ſhe did not beſtow her eſteem. It was, therefore, only a connection of circumſtances, of which the evidence appeared to be irreſiſtible, that impelled her to believe it.

As ſoon as ſhe had finiſhed the narrative, Madame Volmeul took her leave of

of the Counteſs, conſiderably chagrined that her attachment to Tourville ſeemed to have been invigorated by the anecdote, ſhe had been relating.

When the Counteſs was alone, ſhe abandoned herſelf to the impulſes of her heart. For the firſt time, ſhe thought theſe impulſes were virtuous. "Oh Tourville, Tourville," ſhe exclaimed, "why ſhould I ſeek for an "antidote to the paſſion, you have "inſpired? Ah hapleſs Marquis! may "my heart adminiſter to you the bleſ-"ſings, the conſolations, and the tran-"ſports, which the reſt of the world "can never participate. We have "opened a mine of exhauſtleſs love,

" and rapture. I have nothing to fear
" from your inconſtancy; nor you
" from mine. Oh ſacred calamity that
" has woven the ſoft chains of a ſweet
" but myſterious union betwixt us!
" Let it be my ſolace, my taſk day
" and night, to efface the remem-
" brance of your ſufferings. I will
" ſhelter you in my arms, and with
" tears of a ſweet, and hallowed ſym-
" pathy I will bedew the wounds,
" that agitate your boſom. You ſhall
" reverence the tears, that flow from
" the ſacred ſpring of love, and of
" pity, and we will at length teach
" ourſelves to thank heaven for the
" calamity, that has proved the bond
" of a new, and a purer intercourſe.

But

" But alas, have I not pronounced a
" ſentence of baniſhment on the un-
" happy Tourville? Have I not over-
" whelmed him with the perſecutions
" of a cold, and inexorable cruelty?"

In this perturbation of ſpirits, the Princeſs who was impatient at the delay of the Counteſs, found her. The Counteſs was obliged to attend the Princeſs, and had only time to whiſper into the ear of the General, who had entered the apartment at the ſame time; " I ſhould be wretched, my
" dear friend, were you to abandon
" the miſerable Tourville!"

Nothing could equal the joy of the

good General, when he heard the ſentence, which the Counteſs uttered: and he was quite enraptured, at the change, that had taken place in her ſentiments, and the delight, which the communication would pour into the boſom of his friend.

He immediately went in ſearch of the Marquis. Tourville was not at home. He was at Verſailles, for the purpoſe of ſoliciting a penſion for a veteran officer, whoſe ſervices had been overlooked, and forgotten by the Court. Though nurſed on the lap of opulence, and luxury, the heart of the Marquis was not alienated from wretchedneſs, and poverty. And at the very time, when

when his mind was abſorbed in his paſſion for the Counteſs, he did not forget the duties, which his influence, and rank required of him.

The world, it is natural to ſuppoſe, was in proceſs of time, univerſally intereſted in the ſtory of Tourville's calamity. A misfortune of this kind is conſidered as diſgraceful; and the diſgrace of individuals is much more eagerly heard, and more zealouſly ſpread abroad, than the narratives, that record their virtues, or redound to their honor.

It circulated with ten thouſand aggravations. Many of his friends in

the manner, with which they addreſſed him, by their looks, their geſtures, and the tone of their voice, diſplayed a ſympathy for his ſuppoſed ſufferings. This mock-ſenſibility gratified Tourville, becauſe he referred it to the diſappointment he had received in his paſſion for the Counteſs.

The departure of the Counteſs from Paris was a ſevere blow upon the feelings of Tourville. He conſidered himſelf as the cauſe of her abſence; and reſolved to quit the metropolis for ever, rather than to render this beautiful woman on his account, an exile from the ſociety, of which ſhe was the pride, and the ornament.

The General, as ſoon as he ſaw Tourville, obſerved the deepeſt anguiſh imprinted on his brow. "She is gone," cried the Marquis in an ejaculation of deſpair. But when the General communicated to him the laſt words, which the Counteſs had addreſſed to him, and which diſcovered ſo auſpicious a change in her ſentiments, an emotion of joy ruſhed upon his countenance. She had repeated his name in a manner, that ſhewed that ſhe was not indifferent to the Marquis; ſhe had recommended him to the attentions, and aſſiduities of her uncle. "In ſhort," continued the General, "were ſhe ſtill to avoid an intercourſe "with you, I can eaſily obſerve, that

" the ſeparation would inflict upon her " mind as acute a pang, as it inflicts " on that of her lover." In a few minutes, the Duke joined the party; and when he heard the change that had taken place in the breaſt of Madame Clairmont, his joy is ſcarcely to be deſcribed.

I have before remarked that the Duke had more than one motive, for inſpiring the Baroneſs with an error, which her credulity and her vanity equally contributed to render ſo palatable to her taſte. The motives which firſt prompted him to ſeduce her into ſo ridiculous a deluſion, were the gratifications of ſoothing her pride, but above

above all, the hope of diſarming her malice. But it ſtruck him alſo, that the ſcheme would anſwer a more important purpoſe. The diſpoſition of the Counteſs was a myſtery, which he could not ſolve. Her notions, her ſentiments appeared to him entirely incomprehenſible: and he imagined, therefore, that there was no other mode of exciting the emotions of love in her breaſt, but by the very means, which would totally extinguiſh them in the breaſts of others.

" The Counteſs," ſaid the Duke to himſelf, " is alarmed by the pictures " of inconſtancy, and infidelity, which " her own imagination has taught her, " are

" are the uniform vices of the other
" ſex. She has obſerved, within the
" reach of her own experience, the
" melancholy effects of this incon-
" ſtancy; and theſe prejudices have
" fixed a deep, and laſting root in a
" mind, which is ſoftened by the fineſt
" ſenſibilities. The more ſhe loves
" Tourville, the more dread does ſhe
" feel, of the probable infidelity,
" which would break and divert the
" current of his affections. So that,
" the only expedient to which I can
" reſort, is to take the affections of
" the ſentimental Counteſs by ſtra-
" tagem; to inſpire her with the
" idea that the Marquis is the ſenti-
" mental lover merely; that he is not
" inflamed

" inflamed with the ordinary de-
" fires of men; nay, happily for her
" own tranquillity, that he is de-
" prived of the very power of excit-
" ing them."

Theſe were the reaſonings, and the refined calculations of the Duke de Nouville, for the happineſs of his friend. The characteriſtic imprudence of the Baroneſs, her inſatiable curioſity, and the communicative habits of her diſpoſition, were all ſubſervient to his project.

" I congratulate you ſincerely," ſaid he, as he ſeized the hand of Tourville, " on your reviving happineſs.

" The

" The coldneſs of the Counteſs begins
" at length to melt. But, I ſwear,
" that I can account for it. By hea-
" vens, it is my ſecret. The charm
" begins to operate. There is no
" doubt," he continued with a ſmile,
" that the Counteſs has had an inter-
" view with the reſerved Baroneſs de
" Volmeul, before ſhe left Paris.

" Exactly ſo," replied the General.
" The Baroneſs did me the honor to
" ſend word by me to the Counteſs,
" that ſhe had a thouſand ſurprizing
" things to tell her, concerning the
" Marquis Tourville."

" What had ſhe to communicate?"

ſaid

ſaid Tourville impatiently to the Duke. The Duke made no reply.

As for Tourville, it ſeemed to him an utter impoſſibility, that ſuch a woman as the Baroneſs ſhould have acquired any aſcendant over the charming Counteſs. "Ah, of what moment is it," he exclaimed, "from what ſource my happi-"neſs is derived? Every trace of ap-"prehenſion vaniſhes in the firſt mo-"ments of reviving hope; but alas, "it is not long ere hope is ſupplanted "by deſpair in the boſom of a lover." Then the unhappy Marquis delivered himſelf up again to the inquietudes, from which he had enjoyed a momentary relief: and for the firſt time, the

Duke

Duke who was deaf to his entreaties, ſhewed leſs indulgence, than he was wont to extend to the feelings of his friend.

"Why," ſaid Nouville, "why "ſhould you ceaſe to confide in the "efforts of my zeal? My conduct is "myſterious, but let me beſeech you "notwithſtanding, to be guided by "my affection, to believe my ſince- "rity, and to extinguiſh your ap- "prehenſions." He then entreated Tourville, not to give any intimation to the Counteſs concerning the topic, on which they had been converſing. Tourville urged the indelicacy, and the danger of diſſembling with

with the woman he adored; but the earneſt remonſtrances of the Duke, added to thoſe of the General, at length exacted from him a promiſe of ſecrecy.

Upon this condition, the Duke promiſed Tourville, that he would ſhortly introduce him, to one of his moſt intimate friends, who reſided at a villa, very near that, at which the Counteſs was at preſent on a viſit. I cannot expreſs the gratitude, the tranſport, and the impatience, with which the Marquis was agitated. At the expiration of two days, which to Tourville appeared to glide away on wings of lead, the time appointed for the journey

ney arrived. The Duke, though his diſpoſition was too volatile to receive any impreſſion like that of Tourville, had a heart, which was calculated for a ſincere, and laſting friendſhip. He therefore, conſented without reluctance to quit the pleaſures, and the tumult of Paris, which were ſo congenial to his own temper, for the ſolitude of the country, that he might aſſiſt an attachment, which he himſelf had undertaken ſo generouſly to render ultimately ſucceſsful.

During the journey, it was not without difficulty, that Nouville could preſerve the ſilence which he had reſolved to hold, on the ſubject. Tourville put

put a thouſand queſtions to him, concerning the means, which he was employing, to accompliſh his purpoſe. But the Duke remained inexorable, and anſwered him only, by aſſuring him, that a miracle would ſpeedily be wrought in favor of his ſuit.

In a few hours, they arrived at the villa of the Baron, which was very near the houſe of the Princeſs de *****, whom the beautiful Counteſs was at that time viſiting.

The Duke de Nouville, had the higheſt eſteem for the Baron to whom he was about to introduce the Marquis. It was ſcarcely poſſible to find a more

a more amiable character, than that of the perſon, to whom this villa belonged. His family, his domeſtics, all who were dependent upon him, were ſincerely attached to him. He was, therefore, the very man, with whom Tourville would probably cheriſh a cloſe, and durable intimacy: and they felt even on their firſt introduction to each other, a mutual eſteem, and affection, that required nothing but time and frequent intercourſes to cheriſh and confirm.

The Baron de Lauſay was twenty years older than the Marquis. But the diſparity of age was no impediment to a friendſhip, which was inſpired by an uniſon

uniſon of ſentiment; and that diſparity was rather a cement to the intimacy, as it promiſed to confer upon one of them the advantages of a more enlarged, and ripened experience, than he had yet acquired in the world.

The ſolicitude which the Marquis expreſſed in the numerous enquiries, he made concerning the Counteſs, and the emotions, he betrayed, whenever he diſcourſed upon any topic, that related to her, ſoon made the Baron in a great degree acquainted, with the ſtate of his friend's mind. The Duke confirmed his ſuſpicions, and told him the whole ſtory of their loves. Nouville made this communi-

cation,

cation, becauſe he expected conſiderable aſſiſtance from the dexterity, and counſels of the Baron in the generous enterprize, in which he had embarked, to make the two lovers happy, whoſe cauſe he had ſo warmly eſpouſed. The Baron promiſed his efforts, and ſhewed a more than ordinary zeal for the intereſts of Tourville, when he heard the hiſtory of his attachment. "I am happy, my dear "Duke," he exclaimed, "that I have "already paſſed that part of my life, "in which the paſſions eſtabliſh their "empire; and that I can behold the "Counteſs Clairmont, without daring "to cheriſh a hope, that would make "me the rival of Tourville."

The Duke again urged him to pity the impatience of the Marquis, by adopting a project, for procuring an interview between the lovers. A moſt favorable opportunity preſented itſelf. The Baron learned that the Princeſs had prepared a fête the next day, to which a numerous company had been invited; and that the Counteſs at the requeſt of her friend, had undertaken to arrange the amuſements of the occaſion, and to preſide over the ceremonies and pleaſures.

The form of the amuſements was arranged by the taſte of the Counteſs. The viſitors at the Chateau were

ordered to clothe themſelves in the ſimplicity of a village-dreſs, in concert with a number of peaſants, for the purpoſe of celebrating the feſtival of their benefactreſs. The Baron, whoſe mind was intent upon the project, he had meditated, for the happineſs of the lovers, ſignified to Tourville that he intended to join the party with him, if he was not diſinclined to the ſcheme. The propoſal was received with rapture by the Duke, but the Marquis, although he was tortured by the fierceſt deſires, with which love inflames the breaſt of a young man, and burned with the warmeſt impatience once more to behold the countenance, that he adored, did not concur with much eagerneſs

gerneſs in the project. He was reſtrained by the ſenſe of delicacy, which qualified and regulated the paſſion, exceſſive as that paſſion was, which he felt for the Counteſs. Baniſhed as he was, by a ſtern and rigorous decree, from her preſence, he ſcarcely dared to hope, that ſhe could overlook, or forgive the preſumption of his unexpected and unbidden appearance before her.

In vain did the two friends of the amiable Marquis with every ſuggeſtion and remonſtrance, that they could urge, endeavor to overcome the reſerve, and overpower the ſcruples, that had ariſen in his mind. But the conflict, which Tourville himſelf ſuſtained, when he

communed with his own reflections, was ſevere indeed: and he almoſt deprecated the triumph of his underſtanding over the impulſes of his heart. In this ſtate of wretchedneſs, he paſſed a long, and reſtleſs night.

When the hour, at which the Duke, and his friend had purpoſed to join the party at the Chateau arrived, Tourville attended them a conſiderable part of the way, till the ſound of muſic told him, that he was not very far from the ſpot, where the ruſtic feſtival was to be celebrated. Then, urging the violence of his love, and impoſing upon them the warmeſt injunctions of diligence in his favor, while his heart

was

was throbbing with ſuſpenſe, he tore himſelf from them, and returned towards the villa of the Baron.

A circle of ſhepherdeſſes ſurrounded the Princeſs, as ſoon as ſhe made her appearance among them. They were adorned with all the elegance of a rural ſimplicity; and their flowing hair was braided with wreaths of roſes and myrtle. The bloom of health, and the charms of beauty were ſtamped on their countenances. But a countenance of more than human beauty in a few minutes embelliſhed the lovely group. It was a countenance, which though it ſeemed to wear a penſive aſpect, was enlivened with ten thouſand

reſiſtleſs charms: and though the other female figures appeared captivating and lovely, on the appearance of the Counteſs, clad as ſhe was in the ſame homely habiliments, they ſeemed only the vaſſals in her train.

At this moment, the ſhepherds threw themſelves, each at the feet of his elected ſhepherdeſs, with vows of eternal love, and fidelity. What was the ſurprize of the Counteſs, when ſhe recognized the features of the Duke, in the countenance of the ſwain, who had proſtrated himſelf before her! The idea, that Tourville was not very diſtant, ruſhed upon her reflection; ſhe was overpowered with perplexing

and

and enchanting diſquietude concerning him: and though ſhe endeavored to conceal the agitations, that ſtruggled within her, her eyes, her bluſhes, betrayed the cauſe of her emotion. At length, obſerving that the Duke had remarked her embarraſſment, in a tone of apparent heſitation, ſhe aſked him, what he had done with the Marquis, and why they were not together? "Alas! Counteſs," replied the Duke, "is it poſſible that ſuch a queſtion "ſhould be aſked by you? Have you "forgotten that moſt cruel prohibi-"tion—"

The Counteſs at theſe words diſplayed a lok of ineffable tenderneſs and compaſſion.

compaſſion. The Duke knew, what object had excited it. He began to congratulate himſelf on the flattering omens of ſucceſs, which had already favored his project in behalf of the unhappy Tourville. He immediately ran, therefore, to communicate the happy tidings, to the Marquis.

The pleaſure, which the Princeſs enjoyed amidſt the feſtivities of the ſcene, was heightened by the various teſtimonies of eſteem and friendſhip, which her happy viſitors took every opportunity of diſplaying. The gardens were full of the moſt delicious bowers, prepared for the reception of the gueſts, and adorned with emblematical

matical and fantaſtic devices in honor of the Princeſs. One of theſe arbors ſecluded from the reſt, and embo-ſomed in a grove of orange trees, ex-hibited at the entrance the following lines, which were written in characters, that were compoſed by the artificial arrangement of ſmall rows of flowers.

Whoe'er thou art, with down-caſt eye,
With trembling ſtep, and lab'ring ſigh,
Whom ſtartled Echo heard complain,
Of vows unheard, and cold diſdain,
Fond ſhepherd! here, no ſorrows dwell,
For this is Pleaſure's favored cell.

And thou, coy maid, with look auſtere,
If e'er thy footſteps linger here,
Within this ſtill, and ſoft retreat,
That pow'r has fix'd her choſen ſeat;
Who bids the cheek's ſoft ardors glow,
And Paſſion's genial ſtreams to flow.

The

The Nymph that reigns within, invites,
To feaſts of ever new delights:
And bids the trembling ſenſes rove,
Thro' all the labyrinths of love.
Within theſe ſhades no ſorrows dwell,
For this is Pleaſure's favorite cell.

The Princeſs, who was warmly attached to the Counteſs de Clairmont, and had from her earlieſt infancy, expreſſed towards her as much the kindneſs of the parent, as the tenderneſs of the friend, in theſe ſtanzas recognized the taſte of her friend, on whom the taſk of ſuperintending the feſtival had devolved.

At length the hour, when the party were to partake of the refreſhment, that had been prepared for them, arrived.

They

They embarked on board a large Gondola, which was fantaſtically adorned with garlands of flowers, while the ſails, that vibrated with the breath of ſoft and gentle gales, conducted them along with a movement, that was ſcarcely perceptible.

Neither the Duke, nor his friend the Baron had made their appearance. But the Counteſs, who was abſorbed in one contemplation, and whoſe reflections were bent on one object, did not remark their abſence. The whole world was annihilated as it were, to her ſenſes.

The party landed at the termination of

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of the canal, which was formed by an artificial canal. A ſort of hermitage, a wild and groteſque hut, had been erected upon it; and it was, in every reſpect, decorated with a taſte and a ſkill, that almoſt rivalled the powers of enchantment. The attention of the ſpectators was arreſted by the venerable figure of an Hermit, that ſtood at the entrance of the grotto. The furrows of age, the frown of a long, and auſtere experience were impreſſed on a countenance, which was rendered ſtill more venerable, by unuſual length of beard, that ſwept his aged boſom. In a ſolemn, but faſcinating tone, he invited the company to enter the ſequeſtered retreat of his grotto, over the door

door of which was erected an image emblematical of Love, with the following inſcription engraved beneath it.

"THE HERMITAGE OF THE ROCK,
"THE RETREAT OF UNHAPPY
"LOVERS."

The Counteſs read the inſcription with emotions, which it were impoſſible to deſcribe. A collation of creams and fruits was ſet before the party, and the whole group ſeemed delighted, almoſt to tranſport, with the ſurprize and novelty of the ſcene.

After this elegant collation, the attention of the group was attracted

ſuddenly by the melody of muſic, proceeding in gentle and interrupted murmurs from a ſmall chapel, which ſtood not very far from the hermitage. At the ſame inſtant, the Hermit conducted the Princeſs towards an altar, that ſtood in the chapel, on which as it were by enchantment, a moſt beautiful portrait of the Princeſs was exhibited to the happy, and applauding ſpectators.

The Hermit did not relax the aſſumed gravity of the character, he was playing: but in the moſt ſolemn manner, led the amiable patroneſs of the ceremony to the inmoſt receſs of the oratory, into which the light penetrated

trated ſo faintly, that every object around it wore the aſpect of an awful, and ſacred obſcurity. On a couch, placed in this extremity of the chapel, a youth, habited like an Hermit, and concealing his face with his robe, reclined, in a poſture of fixed ſorrow, and deſpair. Reiterated ſighs expreſſed an anguiſh, which weighed heavily on his boſom; and he ſeemed a waſting victim to a grief, that was hourly conſuming him. The loveliеſt of the ſhepherdeſſes was overpowered with compaſſion, as ſhe beheld him; and ſhe was preparing to utter the emotions ſhe felt, when they mutually recognized each other, and the Marquis Tourville, and the Counteſs

teſs Clairmont experienced the bliſsful moments of an intercourſe, which had received ſo hopeleſs, and ſo long an interruption. The imagination, which conceives the tranſports which they enjoyed, muſt be the imagination only of a lover, who has known the celeſtial luxury of an union, which fate had once threatened with an eternal ſeparation.

END OF VOL. I.